Meaning in Movement
Celestina and the Human Condition in Early Modern Spain and Italy

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Meaning in Movement:

Celestina and the Human Condition

in Early Modern Spain and Italy

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Abstract

This study explores the reception and ideological significance of one of the most widely read 'bestsellers' of early modern Europe, the late medieval Spanish novel-in-dialogue *Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas (1499). *Celestina*'s reception has been traced through a variety of methods and sources; however, no single study has yet sought a broader ideological and comparative interpretation of its appeal. I argue that *Celestina* continued to be meaningful because it engaged with one of the central ideological preoccupations of the later Middle Ages and Renaissance, namely the human condition, conceptualised in debates about the misery and dignity of man.

Taking my cues from reception theorists and scholars of cultural translation, I reconstruct the 'horizons of expectation' of *Celestina*'s reception in XVIc Spain and Italy by setting it in dialogue with analogous texts common to both Peninsulas that also deal with this issue. As well as foregrounding how meaning is created in the process of reception, this approach extends *Celestina*'s own methodology, which juxtaposed and re-constituted disparate elements to create something new. I argue that *Celestina* demonstrates how literary texts represent spaces where ideologies can be negotiated, qualified, and even critiqued.

After a discussion of methodological and thematic issues, Chapter 2 juxtaposes *Celestina* and the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* (1546) and examines the concepts of self-knowledge and solitude against conceptualisations of human misery and dignity, and emerging attitudes of disbelief. Chapter 3 uses *Il Cortegiano* (1528) for an investigation into the concept of self-fashioning as it

relates to Renaissance debates about language and courtliness, and changes in XVIc society. Focusing on *La vita delle puttane* (1534) and its translation, the *Coloquio de las damas* (1547), chapter 4 addresses agency and self-hood from the perspective of the margins, exploring the tension between freedom and constraint through the figure of the prostitute. The final section considers the ideological association between the 'mala muger' and *liber pestifer* in the context of XVIc censorship.

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Note on Editions and Translations

Citations from modern editions follow the conventions of the editor. When citing from early modern editions I have silently expanded abbreviations but otherwise preserved the original orthography and punctuation. The main comparison texts are cited both in Spanish and Italian only when significant differences occur, otherwise only the original language has been referred to.

At the end of this line of readers and hearers, we stand. This is a book that changes each time we read it, each time we discuss it with someone else. So to a greater or lesser extent, because we all react differently, the *Celestina* that we know now will not be the same *Celestina* as the one we shall know this time tomorrow.

Alan Deyermond, 'Readers in, Readers of, *Celestina*'

Prologue: 'En su proceso nuevas sentencias sentía'

A canonical work of late medieval Castilian literature, *Celestina* by Fernando de Rojas became one of the earliest European 'best-sellers'. Filtering into the literary consciousness of early modern Europe, it inspired an ongoing dialogue with generations of readers, for whom it continued to hold considerable appeal. Hugely popular throughout the sixteenth century, numerous editions were printed across Europe: in addition to those appearing frequently and regularly in the Iberian Peninsula and Spanish Netherlands, twenty had been produced in Italy by the middle of the century, as well as six in France by 1600.[1] *Celestina* also inspired a multitude of new readings in the form of adaptations and continuations, and was translated into all major European vernacular languages as well as Latin and Hebrew. However, its popularity cannot be understood by empirical data alone. In this study I move from a bibliographic-driven approach to one that focuses on interpretation and the new meanings that texts accrue in new contexts. To explore the continuity between reception and creation that *Celestina* exemplifies, I look at the implications and impact of its reception in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy ideologically, through one of the defining preoccupations of the period, the human condition.

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[1] Details of *Celestina*'s print history are given in Appendix 2. Snow (1997; 2001; 2002) constitutes one of the most important sources for the study of *Celestina*'s reception, and provides a particularly detailed and comprehensive overview of its print history, influence, and allusions made to it in other texts.

Rather than representing a fixed and static object that is passively received by an audience, *Celestina* exemplifies the process-like nature of textual creation, development, and reception. It is both the product of and response to a multitude of conventions from the Middle Ages and incipient Renaissance. Formed from concepts and discourses that circulated throughout Europe – evident in medieval traditions such as courtly love, dialogue, and the use of *exempla*, as well as in its appropriation of elements from Petrarch, Seneca, and the humanistic comedies developed in Italy – what makes *Celestina* so interesting is the way in which it reinterprets these elements for the humanistic environment of late fifteenth-century Spain.[2] For *Celestina*'s engagement with its origins is not uncritical; indeed, it reveals these inherited conventions to be not rigid taxonomies but categorizations capable of adaptation and modification. It is also characterised by a generic dynamism: *Celestina* puts different conventions from various genres, old and new, into dialogue with one another and in the process of this reconfiguration highlights different confluences and perceptions.

The dynamic process of *Celestina*'s origins is furthermore intrinsic to its textual development. In the paratextual material Rojas informs us that he found an anonymous fragment and was so impressed that he decided to complete it, creating a sixteen act *Comedia*, which he then transformed into a twenty-one act *Tragicomedia*; this in turn came to be known both colloquially and in print by the title of its eponymous character, the old bawd Celestina, in a process of

[2] On *Celestina*'s medieval antecedents see Fothergill-Payne (1988) on Seneca and Deyermond (2003 [1961]) on Petrarch – both examples of vernacular humanism; and Pattison, who states that the work is 'firmly rooted in the past' (2009: 116). Gerli notes that it extends notions 'beyond their traditional medieval formulations', and argues that these new forms and immediacy are responsible for 'its fascination, popularity, and vast readership' (2011b: 3); adding that Rojas deals with these earlier medieval conventions in a process of demythification and dislocation (Gerli 2011b: 17). For scholarship on fifteenth century Spanish humanism see Lawrance (1986; 1989; 2012), and Di Camillo (1976; 2010).

reception that places emphasis upon the secondary characters.[3] Written in the 1480s and circulating initially in manuscript form, it was printed as the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* in 1499 in Burgos.[4] It was subsequently reprinted as the *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* in 1502.[5] *Celestina* is thus a hinge text between the Middle Ages and Renaissance – categories acknowledged to be problematic and anachronistic yet that nevertheless structure our discipline. For this reason, it is valuable for thinking through notions of periodisation and interpretation.

The varying and often contradictory interpretations that *Celestina* has elicited are signs of its openness and ambiguity, as we will see in this study *Celestina* performs what Roland Greene suggests is the literary function of ambiguity (2013: 7). The fact that readers and critics alike have disagreed over its meaning did not elude Rojas. The paratextual material, in particular the prologue appended to the twenty-one act *Tragicomedia*, reveals an author who is fully aware that meaning is not constant or fixed but rather open and mobile. It shows that he was attuned to the fact that the creation and reception of literature is a dynamic process involving not only author and reader, but other agents such as

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[3] Since I am not concerned with *Celestina*'s production I will not be addressing the question of its authorship. For an overview of the issue and much relevant bibliographic resources, see the introduction to the recent edition of the *Comedia* by Canet Vallés (2011: particularly pp. 11-30)

[4] The discovery of the Palacio Manuscript confirms that it circulated in manuscript before the *editio princeps*. On this see Faulhaber (1990); more recently Canet Vallés provides a substantial number of bibliographic references for scholarship published on MS-1520 (2011: 11, n. 1).

[5] Though the colophons of the editions of the *Tragicomedia* printed in Toledo and Seville give '1502', these are actually likely to correspond to later print date between 1510 and 1520 (Norton 1966: 155).

editors and printers, as well as other texts themselves.[6] That authors are themselves first and foremost readers is particularly clear in the statement Rojas makes about how each of his own readings of the found fragment brought to the fore 'nuevas sentencias'. Rojas stages the continuum between reading and writing, which was a primary aspect of medieval and Renaissance ideas of creativity.[7] The way in which the book is presented in its sequence of paratexts both reflects upon and is wholly part of the process of textual creation, development, and reception, and suggests that Rojas was engaging with a broader literary environment that was also thinking through the problems of interpretation and authorship. Reading is characterised as an act determined by a nexus of circumstances: among them age, status, education and, of course, purpose:

> Así que cuando diez personas se juntaren a oír esta comedia en quien quepa esta diferencia de condiciones, como suele acaecer, ¿quién negará que haya contienda en cosa que de tantas maneras se entienda? (2000: 20)[8]

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[6] Deyermond (2000: 26-37) provides a useful summary of the different layers of reading *Celestina* underwent in the process of its creation, which include Rojas, the first readers of the manuscript, the printers of the 1500 Toledo edition of the *Comedia* and those involved in producing the *argumentos*, as well as the work's first editor, Alonso de Proaza, on whom see McPheeters (1961).

[7] This is an idea articulated by Carruthers (1990: 189–220), who contends that books are linked by reading and writing 'in a dialogue of textual allusions and transformations' (1990: 218). For relevant studies on *Celestina* see Snow in his 'Reader/Renewer' article (2008b; and 1993), Deyermond (2000), and Weiss (2009), who foreground how meaning is not fixed but created in dialogue with readers in new contexts. Hart gives an example of the way the concept can be applied to other genres, such as the chivalric romance (1989).

[8] Unless otherwise noted, all citations from *Celestina* in Spanish are taken from the Crítica edition edited by Lobera et al (2000). I use Kish's edition for citations from the Italian translation. She provides a description of its major features with recourse to Scoles (1964).

The *Tragicomedia*'s prologue gives an account of the struggle for interpretive authority. It opens with a reference to Heraclitus, borrowed from Petrarch, and continues with imagery of the conflict endemic in all acts of creation; the prologue concludes with Rojas's discussion of reading strategies and his reference to the interfering *punturas* made by the work's printers – a comment about the *argumentos*, summaries of each Act that are far from neutral but rather that emphasise certain aspects of the narrative over others.[9]

But this struggle comes to us most clearly in the depiction of the *Comedia*'s reception and the challenges of the earliest readers who, if Rojas is to be believed, resisted his initial composition and pushed him to return to the text and to re-read, re-interpret, and re-write it. The fact that Rojas significantly modified sections of the *Comedia*, explaining and extending certain passages, jokes, and references, suggests that it was re-written to meet the demands of an audience that had expanded beyond the initial borders of the university where it first circulated in manuscript form.[10] That he attempts to absolve himself of blame for the meanings readers take from the work by placing responsibility squarely in their hands may simply be a trope typical of medieval authors; it may also, however, signal Rojas's acknowledgement of the futility of attempting to control significance, and of the fact that readers are as implicitly involved in creating the significance of texts as authors.

This study takes as its starting point the interpretative openness that characterises the process of reception, as described in the prologue to the

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[9] On the *argumentos* see Gilman (1954-55; 1956: 212-16), Rank (1986), and Deyermond (2000: 30, n. 45; 33).

[10] See Severin (2005: in particular pp. 197-199). Orduna (1988: 6), Chartier (1989: 155-156) and Deyermond (2000: 36-37) have also commented on this.

Tragicomedia. It is not concerned with genetic influence or sources, or indeed authorial intention; neither does it trace the work's influence on later literature or analyse differences between *Celestina* and the continuations and adaptations it inspired; instead it seeks to go beyond empirical studies of its print history and the filiations between editions and translations. Though I do not deny that these are critical and important avenues of investigation they are not the *only* way of approaching reception. Rather, I am concerned with the way a work can be understood differently as it moves through time. I propose an alternative but complementary method of approaching literary reception that explores the evolving significance of *Celestina*'s success within the context of one of the dominant concerns of the early modern period, the human condition, conceptualised in *pro* and *contra* debates about the misery and dignity of man. *Celestina* opens up new ways of seeing contemporary ideas. As the *Tragicomedia*'s prologue intimates, each new act of engagement by an audience has the potential to bring to the fore meanings that may not have been intended or even conceivable at the moment of composition, and to consolidate the conditions for the creation of new works in an ongoing dialogue.

1. Theories and Ideologies

Part One: Methodological Approach

Theories of Reception

Reconstructing the reception of literary texts in the Middle Ages and early modern period is no easy feat, as Maxime Chevalier (1976), D. W. Cruickshank (1978), Jaime Moll (1979), and Keith Whinnom (1980) have addressed. The relative paucity of data that characterises earlier periods, where manuscripts and printed editions, inventories of sales and commissions or ownership, readers' responses, and marginal notes have not been systematically recorded or preserved makes it difficult to gauge reception empirically. When taken as the sole index, however, empirical data provides a relatively limited perspective on the processes and social dynamics of reception and cultural transmission.[1] A bibliographic approach may highlight instances of popularity – providing scholars with hard data about editions and manuscripts – but it cannot explain the *reasons* for a work's success. As D. F. McKenzie argues,

> any history of the book which excluded study of the social, economic, and political motivations of publishing, the reasons why texts were written and read as they were, why they were rewritten and redesigned, or allowed to die, would degenerate into a feebly digressive book list and never rise to a readable history. (1999: 13)

[1] A point made by Moll (1979: 100-101), McKenzie (1999: 16, 19), and Chartier (2007: ix).

Above and beyond the bibliographic difficulties faced by researchers of medieval and early modern literature, a comprehensive understanding of reception necessitates a contextualised and conceptualised approach.

Such a conclusion has been reached over the past few decades by scholars like Judith Fetterley (1978), Mary Louise Pratt (1982-83), Michel de Certeau (1995), Wai-Chee Dimock (1995), and Stephen Mailloux (1989), who acknowledge that reception is not a neutral act that takes place in a vacuum but part of a nexus of variable factors. These scholars situate literary reception within specific contexts, showing it to be determined by a range of constraints and practices – literary, religious, historical, political, and economic – as well as 'larger controlling agencies' in culture and society (such as printers and editors) that, crucially, differ according to time and place.[2] Their approaches build upon theories by Stanley Fish (1976) and Jonathan Culler (1975) about 'interpretive communities' that are constituted by shared pre-existing strategies and conventions, and upon Hans Robert Jauss's concept of 'horizons of expectations'.

The term 'horizons of expectation' first appeared in *Literaturgeschichte als Provokation* (1970) and subsequently in a collection of Jauss's essays in English (1982), where he argues that 'an overarching system of relationships in the literature of a historical moment' can be discovered by taking a synchronic cross-section of the textual culture of the horizon in which it is received (1982: 36). Jauss's 'horizon of expectations' has proven somewhat problematic since his explanation of the term tends to shift throughout *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*.

[2] On this see Tompkins (1980: xxv), Chartier (1989: 165), and Leitch (1995: 39-40). The quote is Holub's (1984: 157).

Definitions by subsequent scholars have referred to it as 'an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a "system of references" or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text' (Holub 1984: 53-69, particularly p. 59); 'the context of cultural meanings within which it was produced' (Eagleton 1983: 83); or the parameters by which readers expect a literary work to function and within which they read and understand it (Bennett 1995: 239).[3] I interpret the term to mean the expectations, experiences and conventions that condition the literary context in which a work is both produced and received, and introduce the conditions for new perceptions. Despite its flaws Jauss's synchronic approach allows us to extrapolate not only the reason for a written work's appropriation but the evolving significances it held.

Jauss's theory is furthermore useful because it highlights the dynamic nature of literary reception, which entails an exchange between the horizon of a work's production and the horizon into which it is appropriated. This exchange not only produces new meanings; it is socially formative. That is, the gap between a reader's expectations and what they encounter, which is brought to light in the process of reading, modifies perceptions and unsettles assumptions and norms (Jauss 1982: 39-41). Texts are not passive objects but active agents of change: in turn they also create or influence the horizons into which they are received. As we will see in this study, *Celestina* exemplifies the fact that there is a creative continuity between reception and creation, and that reading changes the way we not only write but see the world.

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[3] Like Fish and Culler, Jauss was criticised for simply displacing determinacy from one factor (the text/author, or reader) to another (the context), without explaining how they came to be constituted and by whom; and for assuming that the conventions or expectations of a community can be explained any more than the 'meaning' of a text. See Holub (1984: 149, 157) for a discussion of these particular criticisms.

In more recent decades scholars working with theories of 'cultural traffic' or 'cultural translation' have developed approaches that similarly call attention to the fluidity of culture and the relationships that are engendered between the horizons or cultures involved in reception.[4] Such approaches seek to understand the reasons why a text or other artefact is translated across linguistic, national, and cultural boundaries, often by placing the object in question in dialogue with the contemporary socio-historical and ideological context. They focus on the mobility and mutability of cultures: 'translation', according to the *OED*, signifying not only a process of transformation that is linguistic or geographic, but importantly that occurs also from one *condition, form or use* to another and involves the alteration or renovation of meaning; and 'traffic' denoting movement, the exchange of material goods, and communication. It is a process that entails the negotiation of hierarchies or, in the words of Emma Campbell,

> transactions that bring cultures into contact with one another, that draw them towards an awareness of their own limits, that involve them in the exercise of power and influence. (2004: 98)

Theories of cultural translation or cultural traffic are therefore concerned with the problems and possibilities of perspective and interpretation; they provide a way of understanding the society or culture undertaking the act of appropriation.

The work of Peter Burke, Claire Sponsler, and Anthony Pym illustrates such an approach. Sponsler argues that cultural translation does not occur spontaneously or independently but is 'motivated by the necessity of the

[4] See, for example, the collections of essays edited by Gaunt and Weiss (2004), Agapitos and Mortensen (2012), and Wallace (forthcoming; the project's website provides an overview of the scope and aims of the collection: http://www.english.upenn.edu/~dwallace/europe/).

moment' and functions because it is 'homologous with larger structures and concerns' (2002: 25). Burke, too, acknowledges that appropriation is triggered by a need or desire but also states that it can alternatively be borne of deficiency; elements are selected for translation on two opposite principles, he argues: either to 'fill gaps' or as confirmation, to support ideas, assumptions or prejudices already present (2007: 20).[5] Burke maintains that cultural translation hinges on the existence of 'difference', 'foreignness', or 'otherness' that has to be overcome, and which involves 'untranslatable' items that have to be negotiated and made comprehensible in the transposition of something to a new context.[6] Pym (2000) provides an alternative method of approaching cultural translation by looking at how cultures interrelate from the perspective of the agents involved in mediation across borders, both material and symbolic. He focuses primarily on translators, interstitial figures who operate from the intersections or overlaps of cultures, what he calls neutral 'intercultural' space (Pym 2000: 2-3). Pym underlines the fluidity of frontiers between cultures but in doing so suggests that certain elements may be shared, belonging at times to one and then the other group.

Stephen Kelly also touches on notions of 'betweenness' but suggests that texts themselves, as objects in translation, can function as the intermediaries in cultural traffic. Kelly develops an approach similar to Jauss's concept of the 'socially formative' function of literature in that he views texts as 'utopic' sites 'where "constructed and disputed *historicities*, sites of displacement, interference,

[5] These ideas were addressed several decades earlier by Prawer in his work on comparative literature, particularly in his chapter on 'Translation and Adaptation' (1973: 74-98).

[6] See Bhabha (1994) on 'untranslatable' and 'foreign' elements. In his discussion of decontextualization and recontextualisation Burke conceptualises the process of a culture reaching out to an 'alien' object and making it comprehensible as 'domesticating' (2007: 9).

and interaction, come more sharply into view'" (2007: 8-9).[7] His concept not only encourages us to consider texts as intermediaries for understanding a particular culture or society, but leads us to confront the very function of literature, itself a topic addressed by Roger Chartier (1988), Ugo Rozzo (2001), and Roland Greene (2013). These scholars are of the opinion that literature provides a filter through which the ideologies and conventions of society can be understood. Greene's comment in particular is worth citing in full:

> literature is the kind of writing in which semantic complexities, which are finally inseparable from the unresolved issues of the age, are rendered into figure, person, and story. The questions about which historians, cultural theorists, and others speculate are reified in literature and made more equivocal and provocative, more powerful as an instigation to thinking, than in any history or treatise. While other discourses may be compromised by ambiguity, literature is drawn to it – and can fashion it into something new, granting the premium of fresh perspective to old problems. (2013: 7)

More than a 'mirror' onto society or passive objects of reception, texts that perform 'literary functions' create spaces that allow the re-imagining and re-construction of both cultures involved in the exchange.[8]

If a text is a figurative space of 'betweenness' then the material form in which it is manifested represents a tangible conversation between 'horizons'. Texts are, according to Raeleen Chai-Elshoz, 'palimpsestuous' in nature (2011: 3)

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[7] Kelly is here citing Clifford (1997: 25).

[8] See Kelly (2007: 10-11). In his opening chapter, 'What is Literature?', Eagleton dissects the concept of 'literature' and argues that literariness is not so much an inherent characteristic but constituted by the uses to which people – readers – put texts and the value-judgements they assign them, which are themselves deeply rooted in social and historically-located structures of belief and ideologies (1983: 1-16).

– spaces in which we find inscribed different times, places, and voices. The term 'palimpsestuous' furthermore underscores that texts are not finite and fixed but objects in motion: spaces that are constantly being re-inscribed and transformed. Another way of studying the impulses involved in cultural translation, and therefore understanding a text's relationship to the context in which it is read, is to look at the text as material object. Reception is materially determined and materially manifested, as Chartier argues (1989: 154, 161; 1994: 10); formal aspects such as paratextual materials, iconography, layout, typeface, and size act as 'framing devices' and provide an indication of how a work has been interpreted, the position it holds, and the meanings it accrues in its movement to a new time and/or place.

Despite adopting a variety of approaches to reception, the above scholars nevertheless share several key elements. Firstly, they stress the relationship between text and context; rather than abstract or ahistorical, reception is determined by material conditions that need to be contextualised and historicised. Secondly, they share the view that reception is creative and active; they emphasise how meaning is constructed through a dynamic process of dialogue between the moment in which a work is created and the horizon into which it is appropriated. And finally, they acknowledge that this process involves negotiation if not open conflict. The theories outlined in these different methodologies are useful not only for exploring the meaning of *Celestina* but also for what it reveals about the nature of reception and creativity itself. Some of these ideas have been anticipated by a number of the many scholars who have addressed *Celestina* and its reception.

Approaches to Celestina*'s Reception*

Scholarship on *Celestina*'s reception has frequently sought to chart the work's success via bibliographic and data-driven approaches that focus on the details of its textual transmission and print history.[9] Related to this but focused more on the material markers of reception are studies that consider *Celestina*'s printed form and the development of the work's title with recourse to title pages and woodcuts, as well as print license applications and inventories.[10] *Celestina*'s reception has furthermore been approached via more allusive sources: scholars have sought evidence of actual reader responses through evaluative comments found in other texts, as well as examining its influence upon other authors.[11] Along with this latter type of analysis, what Pierre Heugas calls the work's 'descendence', we can also include scholarship on the imitations, adaptations, and continuations that *Celestina* inspired.[12] *Celestina*'s translations, too, have provided fertile ground for exploring the work's European transmission. Yet if a large quantity of research has been done on *Celestina*'s bibliographic history there

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[9] As well as Snow (1993; 1997; 2001; 2002), see Penney (1954), Clemens (1960), Herriott (1964), Scoles (1964), Laurenti and Parqueras-Mayo (1983), Faulhaber (1991), Conde (1997), Botta (1997), Whinnom (2007), and Parrilla (2010).

[10] See Kelley (1985), Kirkby (1989), Lawrance (1993), Montoya Martínez (1999), Griffin (2001), and Severin (2005).

[11] On reader responses see Chevalier (1976), Snow (1997, 2001; 2002), and Gagliardi (2007); examples of the way in which *Celestina*'s influence upon other authors has been dealt with can be found in Heugas (1973), Márquez Villanueva (1973), Damiani (1974), McPheeters (1977), Gianone (1979), and Cárdenas (1993).

[12] These have been studied in detail by Lida de Malkiel (1962).

remains much to be explored about the socio-historical and ideological context of its reception.[13]

The significance of the 1506 Italian translation by Alfonso de Ordóñez, for example, has traditionally been founded upon its position as the earliest surviving version of the *Tragicomedia* and the fact it was used as a base text or witness for later editions, including those produced in Spanish.[14] While I agree the 1506 translation is undoubtedly an important tool in research on *Celestina*, I contend that there remains much more to be said about the reasons why it appealed to sixteenth-century audiences. In her edition of the Italian translation, the first modern one to be published, Kathleen Kish (1973) provides an overview of the omissions, additions, and modifications Ordóñez made, and classifies them according to whether they represent possible responses to local Italian customs and norms, or straightforward errors of interpretation or misreading, as well as providing an appendix that outlines instances of affinity between the Italian translation and the Spanish *Comedia* and *Tragicomedia*. More recently Raffaele Lampugnani has studied the 1506 translation in order to ascertain Ordóñez's approach to its genre and moral message, remarking that it 'may well represent the very first work of criticism on Rojas's masterpiece (1992: 86). Nevertheless, while a valuable resource, there is little in depth theorisation about how Ordóñez's approach may have been determined by the socio-cultural or ideological context in which he was working. Devid Paolini (2011) has looked at the circumstances of Ordóñez's translation in a study of the translator's

[13] The need for a contextualised approach to bibliographic data about *Celestina* is acknowledged by Chevalier (1976: 141).

[14] Noted by Kish (1973: 11); see Norton on the importance of the 1506 edition as the oldest surviving extant version of the *Tragicomedia* (1966: 155), and Scoles (1961: 164-165) on its status as a witness for translations into other languages, including Castilian.

relationship to Madonna Gentile of Campofregoso, the illegitimate daughter of Federico of Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, to whom the work is dedicated. Paolini's article is useful for contextualising the networks of patronage and intellectual life of early sixteenth-century Italy; however, there is still scope for further studies that explore *Celestina*'s reception with reference to the social and ideological context of early modern Europe – hence my focus on the particular topic of the misery and dignity of man.

That said, socio-historical analysis of the translations in general has not been neglected. In fact they have provided a means for scholars to address not only the reasons for the work's European popularity, highlighting the changing meanings attributed to *Celestina* as it moved from one literary culture to another, but also to understand the societies into which it was appropriated.[15] Enrica Ardemagni (1993) approaches *Celestina*'s European translations from the perspective of their historical and social contexts, as well as considering the dilemmas facing its translators. In a comment that mirrors Rojas's own words in the *Prólogo* to the *Tragicomedia*, she foregrounds the fact that translation is a manifestation of a particular instance of appropriation, stating that 'if a dozen translators tackle the same text, they will produce a dozen different versions of that text' (Ardemagni 1993: 185).[16] In their studies of the German translations, Kish and Ursula Ritzenhoff (1980) display sensitivity towards the cultural context in which Wirsung's two versions were made and note how these new readings, so

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[15] Fothergill-Payne has similarly paid attention to the representation of 'celestinesque' elements in Spanish adaptations and continuations produced at the end of the sixteenth century, which were modified to suit the ideological demands of a changed political and religious context, and re-interpreted with moralising and allegorical intent (1986: 29).

[16] See also Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 26), with whose theories of early translation Ardemagni engages.

different from each other, act as a barometer on the changing society of sixteenth-century Germany; they also provide information about wider socio-cultural issues – linguistic development, the history of printing and illustration, and the cultural ramifications of the Reformation. Fernando Carmona-Ruiz (2006; 2007) also contextualises Wirsung's modifications within a changed religious environment, and uses the woodcuts to call attention to the way in which the second translation was adapted to suit the tastes and culture of German society in this period (2007: 344-370). *Celestina*'s translation into French, addressed by Gerard J. Brault (1963) and Dennis L. Drysdall (1974), has more recently be looked at by Florence Serrano (2008), who analyses the differences between the three versions and their various attempts to adapt the work to the literary environment of France.

Building on earlier editions by Dorothy S. Severin (1969) and Guadalupe Martínez Lacalle (1972), John G. Ardila (1998) and, most recently, José María Pérez Fernández (2013) have looked at the context of James Mabbe's English translation. Pérez Fernández relates the significance of Mabbe's 1631 translation to the social and cultural milieu of early seventeenth century England – a 'dynamic world of letters' (2013: 54) – and places Mabbe in a context of international networks of exchange (2013: 44-66). His approach is comparative and seeks to show how the Spanish *Celestina* and English *The Spanish Bawd* 'shed light upon each other, and also upon the evolution that their respective intellectual and historical contexts underwent' (2013: 65). Ardila assesses the English translations in the environment of puritanical religious and moral reform, using the 1606 Abuse of Players Act as a departure point for an investigation of the effects of state intervention upon Mabbe's translations,

concluding that they respond to the mind-set of early seventeenth-century England (1998: 38). He also highlights the relative paucity of attention paid by *Celestina* scholars to the effects of censorship upon literary reception.

Any account of *Celestina*'s reception in the sixteenth century, or indeed that of any other work of vernacular fiction at this time, needs to consider early modern attitudes towards censorship. For debate over the meaning and moral intentions of *Celestina* is by no means a phenomenon of modern scholarship. Sixteenth-century audiences and critics also disagreed over its benefits and dangers; indeed, contemporary reception of the work was no less characterised by the inability of readers to agree on its value. Throughout the sixteenth century there were consistent demands from clerics and scholars – among them Juan Luis Vives, who called it the 'nequitiarum parens' (1996: 44) – to have it prohibited and existing copies recalled and destroyed. Nevertheless, *Celestina* was simultaneously considered a work of great style as well as moral merit: the dedication by Simón Borgoñón in the 1570 Salamancan edition printed by Mathias Gast claims that it was suitable if not necessary reading material for clerics, presumably so they could keep an eye on 'lo que passa en la vida'.[17] Yet, despite the consistent opposition and criticism *Celestina* faced it escaped official censorship in Spain throughout the sixteenth century and was not expurgated until the Indexes of Zapata (1632) and Sotomayor (1640).[18] Though the Portuguese Inquisition prohibited it in 1581, *Celestina* was not placed on a Spanish

[17] Cited in Gagliardi (2007: 69-70).

[18] On the seventeenth century expurgations, which expunged blasphemous material, see Green (1947) and Gagliardi (2007: 74-77).

Index of banned books in its entirety until the eighteenth century.[19] Indeed, it remained a best-seller in Spain throughout the sixteenth century. Hilaire Kallendorf remarks that there exists a double standard in the outrage the work's obscenity provoked and its simultaneous consistent appeal to audiences and position as a 'best-seller' (2003: 78). Is it possible, then, that *Celestina* was not censored earlier in part because it was so commercially successful?[20]

In Italy, it remained a regular feature of the Italian presses until the 1560s, after which point it was not printed; yet it did not appear on any list of banned books issued by an Italian office or state until 1593.[21] Kallendorf explains this apparent change in popularity as a consequence of a shift in market demand, which turned towards works of devotional and spiritual content; but she also proposes that Inquisitorial investigations into printers and booksellers may have been influential.[22] This is not to say that *Celestina* did not still circulate; it would be simplistic to assume copies of earlier editions suddenly disappeared from the reading public and it undoubtedly continued to circulate and to be sold on the second-hand book market. Nevertheless, a lack of official state or ecclesiastical censorship does not preclude a work from posing questions of a potentially problematic nature to its audience. It may be that despite not being prohibited

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[19] Of the continuations, only the *Segunda Celestina* by Feliciano da Silva, referred to as the *Resurrection de Celestina*, appears on the Spanish Index of Valdés in 1559.

[20] Grendler (1977: 85, 99-101) and Kamen (1997: 117-118) discuss how censorship was resisted by the book industry in Venice and Barcelona respectively.

[21] *Celestina Comedia di Calisto & Melibea* appears in a Roman list of banned books in 1593; on which see Bujanda (1994: 320, 323, 366, 906). Rozzo notes that the list of 1593 had a very restricted circulation and that certain works, such as *Celestina*, were not added to the 1596 Index of Clement VIII (2001: 206-207).

[22] Kallendorf focuses specifically on the press of Gabriele Giolito, the last to print *Celestina* in Italy in the sixteenth century (2003: 82-84). See also Grendler (1977: 133).

until much later it had become difficult to sanction *Celestina*'s publication in Italy in the atmosphere of increasing spirituality and religious reformation that characterised the latter half of the century. It is generally now accepted that censorship is not simply a top-down process of repression and oppression but one that traverses the public and private spheres and can become naturalized as the accepted limit or decorum of a particular discourse in which various agents – editors, printers, and readers – are complicit.[23] This process also implicitly informs attitudes towards reading as a moral practice that could be both edifying and potentially dangerous.[24] As will be discussed in the chapters to come, it is this type of 'soft' censorship (*censura difusa*) that *Celestina*, along with the other works addressed in this study, is subject to in the sixteenth century.

Concurrent with many of the above-mentioned studies of *Celestina*'s translations, other scholars have engaged directly with socio-historical and ideological contexts as a means of understanding its significance, reception, and legacy. Beginning with Roberto González Echevarría (1993), this approach can be seen more recently in research by Lucia Binotti (2007), E. Michael Gerli (2011b), and Roland Greene (2005; 2013). Gerli does not engage with the sixteenth-century reception of *Celestina*, but he does underscore the importance of reading it from a comparative perspective as part of an implicit dialogue, stating that the work

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[23] See the introduction by Vega and Weiss to *Reading and Censorship in Early Modern Europe* (2010: 10-14 particularly). Essays in the collection, e.g. those by Fragnito (2010) and Weiss (2010), build upon the research of scholars of early modern England who initiated a new perspective on 'soft' censorship (for references see Vega and Weiss 2010: 10 note 4) as well as investigations by scholars of Renaissance Italy, France, and the Iberian Peninsula who have pursued a similar interpretation (noted in Vega and Weiss 2010: 12-14).

[24] Nakládalová (2013) provides a recent study of learned reading practices in the early modern period that looks at the moral conceptions of reading.

> moves beyond the bounds of traditional forms of reading satisfied only with decoding a series of sexual or material signs and situating [it] within the context of an emerging bourgeoisie in the late fifteenth century. Rather, *Celestina* propels us toward a rereading of it in relation to other texts in such a way as to compare it to the earlier texts' potential for portraying and mobilizing human want. (2011b: 5)

For Gerli such a comparison forces us to see *Celestina* as something quite different and new, a modern text. His approach suggests that it embodies the process of transformation – a process that is not only inherent in the creative development of *Celestina* as a work of literature, but that speaks to a period in society when the relationship between existing elements and newly emerging forms are being re-constituted and tested (Gerli 2011b: 5).

Echevarría, Greene, and Binotti also show how *Celestina* provides changing perceptions of the world, enacting what Jauss calls literature's 'socially formative' function. They provide a model for my own research because they go beyond bibliographic data and link the meanings accrued by *Celestina* in its movement to a new time and place to the socio-historical context of its reception. Binotti is acutely aware that the interpretation and reception of literary texts is not abstract and universal but a process grounded in material phenomena and the interventions of editors and printers. Her study, which places *Celestina*'s reception within debates known as the *questione delle lengua*, examines how the impulses that led to the packaging of the *Tragicomedia* as a canonical text in Italy 'suggested different ideological uses and a different attention to the work based on the changing social conditions of this new readership' (2007: 315, 85-86).

González Echevarría and Greene similarly contextualise *Celestina*'s significance according to the conventions and values of the later periods and places in which it was received. Both scholars advocate a comparative methodology as a crucial means of determining meaning, reading the *Tragicomedia* through and against later works from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Like Gerli, who locates *Celestina* on an axis from the Middle Ages to Modernity, González Echevarría (1993: 4-5) and Greene both view *Celestina* as the creator of early modernity. Greene, for example, comments that 'the continuing power of this work owes something to [the] anticipations of later discourses' (2005: 232). He develops this idea in his most recent monograph (2013), which proposes a further innovative method of undertaking cultural studies – namely by carrying out a comparative, multi-lingual exploration of sixteenth-century literature and culture through key words rather than an idea or ideology, theme, or series of texts. In his discussion of 'resistance' in *Celestina*, Greene uses the conceit of the *cartone* – 'an early modern cartoon, that is, a sketch on plaster to be developed later or left in its raw state' (2013: 8) – to signify an idea that has not quite fully evolved or taken form. Greene's approach emphasises how despite lacking a label or comprehensive significance, literary texts can express concepts that are in the process of becoming realised. He is concerned with 'the *meanings in motion*, not the conceits or, for that matter, the works or writers' (2013: 11; my emphasis) – a statement that directly inspires the title of this study.

The scholarship discussed above serves as an example of the way in which theoretical methodologies can be used to construct the critical frameworks needed to undertake literary history. While I build upon and develop many of the ideas proposed by the above-mentioned scholars of *Celestina* and those of

reader reception and cultural translation, my own conceptual approach to *Celestina*'s reception and its engagement with the theme of human misery and dignity hinges upon two interwoven metaphors: dialogue and liminality.

Dialogue and Liminality

I contend that *Celestina* functions as one interlocutor in a macro-dialogue that, like its formation and reception, takes place on a supranational level. This idea is a fitting methodological tool for a work like *Celestina*, which inspired an ongoing dialogue with later readers. The multitude of translations, continuations, and adaptations it inspired is testament not only of its wide appeal but also of its status as a key interlocutor in sixteenth-century European literature and thought. As Pérez Fernández comments, 'Few texts are as seminal as *La Celestina* when it comes to the creation of early modern networks of literary and cultural exchange' (2013: 6).

The concept of dialogue is useful because it represents a constructive conversation between two or more interlocutors that entails the exchange of concepts in a process of re-constitution and negotiation. *Celestina* exemplifies Pym's theory of the 'intermediary' and Kelly's notion of the text as cultural 'go-between'.[25] Like the go-between represented within its pages it brings disparate elements together, both high and low, to create communities of thought and also

[25] I would contend that texts meet Pym's two criteria for a true intercultural 'space': firstly they are the product of professional intermediaries (and here I widen Pym's use of this definition to include printers and editors); and secondly whether translated into another language or in transit across time or location they are derivative or dependent on something else, in this case an earlier version of a work (2000: 5).

highlight moments of tension and conflict. In doing so *Celestina* produces a dialogue that is more than the sum of its parts; for, when interpreted together the significance of its constituent elements surpasses their individual meaning. Like the words from which they are formed, texts exist in ceaselessly interlocking chains of meaning that are constantly revitalised and renewed by being read against one another.

Used as a conceptual framework, dialogue underscores the mobility of culture. *Celestina* exemplifies the idea of the inter-textual 'go-between' or 'intermediary' because of the nature of its origins – being formed from conventions, discourses, genres, and ideologies that circulated back and forth across Europe. It is for this reason that the assessments of Sponsler and Burke, which focus on either a 'need/lack' or 'desire' as impulses in reception, are ultimately unsatisfying when applied to such an open, ambiguous, and divisive work as *Celestina*. There were certainly aspects of it that required re-contextualisation and explanation for audiences outside of the Iberian Peninsula, as Kish (1973; 1992; 2009) and Ardemagni (1993) discuss; and as a material object it was dealt with by printers and editors in Italy and Spain in such a way as to appeal to audiences within specific 'horizon of expectations'. Yet I contend that *Celestina* would not have been seen as 'alien' or 'foreign'; rather it exists in a trans-national and trans-lingual 'shared space'.[26] Being so very familiar in content and form, it could not really be seen to fill a gap; nor can we truly say that it simply confirmed already existing concepts or values. Rather, I draw another conclusion from the discussions of Sponsler and Burke about the impulses inherent in cultural translation. *Celestina* illustrates instead that texts are

[26] In this I taken inspiration from Stock's notion of 'textual communities' (1983).

appropriated or continuously engaged with because they fill a gap in the sense that they represent a response to a need for critique.

Within any dialogue there can exist dissenting voices. Indeed, this is aptly demonstrated in *Celestina* itself by the use of the subversive aside, which represents one method by which criticism and alternative perspectives are manifested. The concept of liminality thus becomes useful here. As a text on the threshold of different boundaries – chronological, linguistic, geographical, and ideological – *Celestina* has a particularly unique position. This is summarised by Linde M. Brocato:

> Caught between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as shaped (and conceptualised) around the form of the book, the discursive and textual world of *Celestina* is caught up in the powerful play of the word – uttered, commented, repeated, accessible – circulating far beyond what had therefore been imaginable, and helping to create in Spain a complex and critical intertext. (1996: 123)[27]

I contend that the ambiguity in *Celestina*'s position – which Greene suggests constitutes literature's main function (2013: 7) – cannot wholly be accounted for by Sponsler and Burke's theories. Rather it can alternatively be explored through the analogy of the literary *aparte*. Like the voices of the marginal characters in the narrative, the work is itself liminal: it does not represent a main interlocutor in strictly philosophical or theoretical debates about the human condition but

[27] See also Maestro, who states that 'La crítica parece aceptar unánimemente que *La Celestina* no es en realidad una obra ni medieval ni renacentista, sino que más bien trata de instituir un horizonte de expectativas diferente de cualquier poética entonces normativa; en realidad surge como ruptura de la tradición literaria procedente de la Europa medieval y del mundo antiguo. Los autores de la *Celestina* no quisieron continuar exactamente los temas y las fuentes del mundo grecorromano, sino abatirlos, embestir contra ellos, desmitificarlos' (2003 [2000]: 49).

interacts from the sidelines like an *aparte*. Glossing what is being said in the 'central' discourse, *Celestina* provides an elusive commentary that is neither fully overheard nor perhaps understood and which, like the asides of the characters themselves, sometimes qualifies and at others critiques concerns that are addressed in central debates. Brocato argues that the asides in *Celestina* are 'critical to the text and its world and to our understanding of it' because they do not only comment upon the behaviour of other characters or reinforce didactic or moral messages; they also draw attention to what is significant in the work itself, both in terms of content and style (1986: 107). Brocato's analysis is useful because it demonstrates the tension between the perspectives of those at the centre of any dialogue, and those on the peripheries, and draws attention to the subversive and unbalancing effects of the latter (1986: 111-112), echoing Campbell's view that the process of cultural translation involves a negotiation of hierarchies and power (2004: 98).

From its position on the edges of this macro-dialogue, *Celestina* provides new and alternative perspectives on longstanding debates. I contend that this function stems also from its form as a novel-in-dialogue. Dialogue is not, of course, the same as dialogic. Nonetheless, this form was common in the Middle Ages and Renaissance.[28] It became a way of addressing and understanding the world because it gave space to explore rather than simply prescribe the truth about a particular philosophical or social issue, such as the human condition. Jon R. Snyder comments that dialogue allowed writers the opportunity to address issues 'laterally' or obliquely (1989: 8); in fact he remarks that 'it became a convention, even an institution, for representing the margins of what could be

[28] See Snyder (1989) and Cox (1992) on Renaissance dialogues.

represented in the Renaissance literary system of generic codes and forms' (Snyder 1989: 8). By weighing up the *pro et contra* dialogues presented their subject matter from a variety of different, even contradictory perspectives. Arguing from both sides of the debate often within the very same text not only showcased an author's rhetorical skills, as Lyndan Warner argues, it suggested that 'the truth, if there was a truth, lay somewhere between these two extremes' (2011: 66), even providing a space in which an accepted truth could be challenged or replaced by another overlooked point of view.[29]

Celestina therefore enacts what Jauss called the 'socially formative' function of literature, and illustrates how, as Chartier (1988), Rozzo (2001), and Kelly (2007) propose, textual culture provides a filter through which ideologies and conventions can be understood, juxtaposed, and critiqued. As Greene writes,

> While other discourses may be compromised by ambiguity, literature is drawn to it – and can fashion it into something new, granting the premium of fresh perspectives to old problems. (2013: 7)

One of the problems that *Celestina* provided a fresh perspective on is the human condition, conceptualised in debates about the misery and dignity of man. This topic constituted a dominant issue in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy, the primary geographical focus of this study.

The synchronic approach to literary history I undertake advocates a perspective that is not only temporal but also spatial. Although a truly pan-European success, this study concentrates on *Celestina*'s reception in Spain and

[29] See Warner (2011: 70) and Pérez Fernández (2013: 29).

Italy.[30] As empirical data on *Celestina*'s print history confirms, the work enjoyed considerable success in both Peninsulas for much of the sixteenth century (see Appendix 2). However, as stated in the Prologue, my study pursues a more socio-historical and ideological approach. *Celestina*'s reception in these Peninsulas needs to be viewed as part of a broader context of contact and exchange.[31] Political links between the Iberian and Italian Peninsulas were established in the fifteenth century when Alfonso V of Aragon settled his court in Naples after conquering the city in 1443. Spanish presence (represented largely by the Kingdom of Aragon) continued when Ferdinand II re-took Naples in 1504 from the French, who had conquered the city in 1495, and remained throughout the 'Italian Wars' and during Hapsburg rule for the duration of the century. However, links between the two peninsulas went beyond the military and political. With Pope Alexander VI, or Rodrigo Borgia, presiding over the papacy between 1492 and 1503 Spain's influence could be felt in the seat of religious power early in the century. Trade routes between maritime cities such as Venice and those on the eastern Iberian coast (Valencia, Barcelona) cemented the flow of people, material goods, and ideas that had been established earlier in the Middle Ages.[32] As a result of this, literary and artistic links between the two peninsulas were strong. Under Aragonese patronage Naples became an important centre for scholarship, attracting a number of Italian and Spanish

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[30] I use the terms 'Spain' and 'Italy' in full awareness that they describe nations that did not at this point exist in the way we understand them to now.

[31] For details of the cultural links between Spain and Italy see Croce (1922), Meregalli (1974), Gómez Moreno (1994), and more recently the collections of essays edited by Piras and Sapori (1999) and by Dandelet and Marino (2007); the latter of which covers a wide range of areas including the economy, political and social life, and religion as well as art and culture.

[32] On which see Gómez Moreno (1994: 296-314).

writers, such as Juan de Valdés, author of *Diálogo de la lengua* (1535). A number of Spanish scholars spent time in other city-states and republics: Alfonso de Ordóñez, Francisco Delicado, author of *La lozana andaluza* (1528), a 'descendent' of *Celestina*, and Alfonso de Ulloa, an important translator and editor, worked for much of their lives in Rome and Venice; and Antonio de Nebrija, author of the *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492), studied at Bologna.

In Spain, Isabel la Católica promoted several Italian humanists at her court in Castile – the most famous being Pedro Martyr and Lucius Marineus Siculus – and throughout the century Spain attracted various Italian artists, who produced work for the Spanish nobility, church, and monarchy. Italian cities such as Florence and Bologna had long played an important role in the material and textual culture of the Iberian Peninsula, providing manuscripts long before the advent of printing. The establishment of Venice as a centre of cultural production had important implications for both peninsulas, attracting Spanish authors and editors such as Delicado and Ulloa, and serving as a centre for the distribution of Spanish works across Europe.[33] Italy's involvement in the book trade in Spain can be seen with the relocation of individuals and families involved in printing, such as the Giunta, who came to the Peninsula in the 1520s and established presses in several cities under the name of Junta.[34] *Celestina* was also part of a phenomenon that saw the transmission of other literary genres and

[33] On the printing of Spanish literature in Venice, see Pallota (1991).

[34] On the Giunta family in the Iberian Peninsula, see Pettas (2005); several Italian printers are also mentioned by Norton as working there in the first quarter of the sixteenth century (1966: 22, 29-30, 34, 63).

works between the peninsulas, such as the sentimental romances and *libros de caballería* from Spain, and Petrarch and Boccaccio from Italy.[35]

As I have argued, *Celestina* is one interlocutor in a supra-national dialogue about the human condition. This study examines its interactions with contemporary works that constituted other possible participants. The primary texts against which I read *Celestina* are common to both Peninsulas and form part of the environment of cultural exchange that characterised medieval and early modern Europe: Fernán Pérez de Oliva's *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*, Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, and Pietro Aretino's *La vita delle puttane*. They are works that we know from empirical sources were translated, printed, circulated and read concurrently to *Celestina*.[36] While analogous, however, many of them have not previously been examined in depth or detail in conjunction with Rojas's work. Like *Celestina*, these interlocutors demonstrate a desire to understand the human condition. Like *Celestina* they, too, exemplify the continuity between creation and reception, inspiring further continuations and translations that similarly demonstrate a desire to engage critically with their meaning.

Though I put into dialogue texts and conventions that may at first appear divergent, it is an approach that extends *Celestina*'s own methodology. Rojas's work is formed from and itself juxtaposes a variety of conventions, genres, and

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[35] On the reception of these Spanish genres in Italy see Binotti (2010). Di Camillo (2010; 2012) and Paolini (2008) have also raised the possibility that *Celestina* was written in Italy (possibly Florence), given the influence of Italian humanist culture on the work. For a more general discussions of the literary and artistic links see Gómez Moreno (1994: 296-314), López Cordón (1999: 52-54, and 56-58) and Amelang (2007: 433-445).

[36] Sixteenth-century printers were commercial as well as cultural agents and it was imperative that they were sensitive to the demands of the reading public; on which see Griffin (1988). Their presses thefore provide an indication of the texts that were likely bought and read alongside *Celestina*.

ideologies, in doing so re-negotiating their meanings to create something new and original.[37] Formal differences should not prevent us from reading these works comparatively. Sixteenth-century audiences would not have read texts belonging only to certain generic categories (which themselves are often modern divisions); instead they were accustomed to making connections between disparate works – something demonstrated by the practice of *compilatio* and the creation of *florilegia*.[38]

A work like *Celestina* that exemplifies the fluidity between cultures and the continuity between creation and reception necessitates an approach that crosses the discipline and period boundaries that structure modern scholarship. As Jennifer Summit and David Wallace state,

> Assigning literary texts to a specific period tethers them to the moment of their composition: yet the nature of literary texts and stories is to circulate, allowing consumption to take place at a great remove from composition. In the space between composition and consumption, texts become subject to new meanings and uses. Textual circulation is a sign not simply of 'continuity' but also of cultural transformation. (2007: 448-449)

María José Vega is another scholar who has addressed the problems of genre and periodization and the distortion that modern categories can bring with particular reference to the misery and dignity of man. Vega explains that certain texts are

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[37] Greene makes a similar assertion: 'Bringing these cultural regimes into a single conversation is a risky enterprise, but it reminds us of the complexity of the age, whether we call it the Renaissance or something else' (2013: 12). Severin, too, notes that *Celestina* is a 'generic hybrid: neither humanistic comedy nor sentimental romance, it creates its own new dialogic and novelistic genre which prefigures the world of both *Lazarillo* and *Don Quijote*' (1989: 2, 5).

[38] Nakládalová (2013) discusses strategies such as *imitatio*, *copia*, *compilatio*, synthesising the work of earlier critics like Moss (1996).

liable to be misdiagnosed or neglected by scholars because they do not fit neatly into modern binary categorisations that relate misery with the medieval and dignity with the Renaissance.[39] Maintaining that the two sides to man's nature need to be thought of as 'temas complementarios y no contradictorios' (2011: 5-6), as indeed they often were in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, Vega critiques traditional binary approaches that overlook aspects discernible in some sixteenth-century texts (such as the Epicurean tradition that denies Providence), and that also sideline medieval concepts of man's dignity. Ultimately, Vega's approach is useful because it highlights the liminal position of literary works, like *Celestina*, that do not easily fit into generic categories; because it suggests that debates about the human condition are multi-stranded, include texts from a variety of genres and make use of different motifs at various points; and highlights how the meaning of labels used to categorize mankind, such as 'misery' and 'dignity', evolves as new texts become part of the dialogue.

Part Two: Theme and Texts

Ideologies of the Human Condition: Misery and Dignity

Celestina's reception in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy intersects with a period when the human condition was a central ideological concern and explored in all

[39] See Vega (2009: in particular pp. 120-122). Murchland has also called attention to the danger in such a binary: 'The Middle Ages were by no means as dark as Innocent's vision would indicate; nor was the Renaissance as healthily optimistic as it has often been interpreted to be' (1966: vi). The problem undoubtedly stems from Burkhardt's problematic assertion that the 'enlightened' individual suddenly appeared in the Renaissance, a view that is ignorant of medieval concepts of selfhood (1958: 143).

manner of texts and from a variety of perspectives. As Paul Oskar Kristeller notes, medieval and Renaissance concepts of man are complex and difficult to define because they encompass a broad variety of views and range of issues – moral, political, and religious (1972: 2). To summarise very simply, man was characterised simultaneously as a creature of immense misery, base and lowly, born and dying in filth and sorrow, who inhabited a weak and fragile body ruled by animalistic passions (greed, drunkenness, lasciviousness) and was subject to the vicissitudes of nature, the elements, and fortune; and at the same time as a being with great potential for excellence and dignity, made in the image of God, situated at the centre or outside of the cosmos, and gifted with dominance over the natural world, language, reason, intellect and free will. Yet these issues were not static or present in every text on the subject; rather they grew and waned in popularity and evolved with time.[40]

Debates about the misery and dignity of man were concerned, essentially, with human nature and the human condition. The concept of 'human' needs some attention, however, since its usage in the Middle Ages and early modern period differs from that of today. Classical and earlier medieval interpretations contrasted 'human' with 'animal' or 'barbaric' and set it against the divine; in earlier medieval Spanish texts, for example, the term 'humano' appears in relation to concepts such as the divine, the body, and knowledge.[41] In contrast, by the

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[40] These discussions form the ideological background to this study. However, I refer readers to the large body of scholarship on the topic, which provides a wealth of detail about the individual themes and issues, sources, and relevant bibliography that goes beyond the scope of this investigation. The particular question of man's misery and dignity has been tackled by numerous scholars: from Baker (1961), Bultot (1961; 1964), Cassirer (1963), Trinkaus (1970), Kristeller (1961; 1972), Dales (1977), and Rico (1986); to more recent critics such as Clúa Ginés (2003), Granada (2003), Baranda (2003a), Navarro Durán (2006), Cappelli (2003; 2006), Valor Moreno (2010), and Vega (2003; 2009; 2011).

[41] *CORDE*

later Middle Ages the term had acquired connotations of 'kindness' and 'gentleness', and had come to be synonymous with 'courtesy' and 'politeness'.[42] By the sixteenth century we find it being used in texts with additional moral and social connotations that focused far more upon the individual's relationship with others and wider social structures, and to indicate mercy, good conversation, and in the phrase 'un hombre humano'.[43] Alfonso de Palencia's *Universal vocabulario en latin y en romance ó Universale compendium vocabulorum cum vulgari exposition* (1490) defines 'humanus' as:

> derivatur possessive ab homine et humanus iocundus amicabilis homo qui erga homines amice se babet et humanitas humanitatis virtus qua nos inuicez benivole contuemur / possessivamente viene de ombre. Humanus es plaziente amable el ombre que trata con amor alos otros ombres. Humanitas es virtud con que unos tratan a otros amigablemente.

Likewise, in Sebastián de Covarrubias's 1611 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española*, which refers to texts from the Middle Ages as well as the sixteenth century, to be 'humano' not only signified 'Aquello que puede pertenecer al hombre' or 'los descendientes de Adán', but 'el que es apacible, compasible, acariciador, benigno y manso' (2006: 1078). The fact that 'Humanarse' is qualified with the comment 'humillarse y reconocerse, ser cortés con todos y afable, aunque sea gran señor' (Covarrubias 2006: 1078) suggests that to be human not only requires self-knowledge but that one's humanity is defined by how one relates to others.

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[42] Williams (1976: 148-150) traces the history of these and other key words in European ideology and thought.

[43] *CORDE*

To be human in the later Middle Ages and Renaissance thus entailed more than simply being *not* animal, *not* plant, or *not* divine: it implied a moral judgement about one's conduct and way of being in society. This understanding of humanity stretches back to Aristotle's concept of man as 'zoon politikon', in the sense that he is defined by and realises his potential because of his relationships with others and the community, including social structures and institutions.[44] As we will see, this is a concept that underpins all of the discussions in this study. The implications of medieval and Renaissance concepts of the human condition were felt beyond theological or philosophical debates; rather they represented the basis upon which society and human relations at all levels were structured. This is evident in works that conceptualised the ordering of society and the relationships between the estates.[45] It also structured relations between the genders, with the 'excellence' of women debated and conceptualised according to similar ideological frameworks as general discussions about mankind.[46]

While ostensibly a tale about the fated love affair between two noble youths and the marginal characters with whom they interact, my thesis is that *Celestina* continued to be meaningful because it engages with this dominant strand of thought about the human condition prevalent in the Renaissance. At the heart of the *Tragicomedia* is a preoccupation with what it means to be human and the moral complexity of this; the work explores man's relationships with others

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[44] See Barnes, who discusses these ideas in Aristotle's *Politics* and the *Nichomachean Ethics* (1982: pp. 79-83 particularly).

[45] Cappelli calls the Spanish *literatura de estados* 'un lugar estragético' for thinking about the human condition, stating that 'nos situamos en la encrucijada de la cuestión de la "miseria" y la "dignidad" del hombre, es decir, del problema del lugar y de la finalidad del hombre en la vida terrena' (2003: 14).

[46] See Warner (2011) for an example of one approach that links debates about the human condition and debates about women.

and the divine, the conflict inherent in man's very nature, and the tension between self and society. It deals with individuals who seek to better themselves materially and socially, if not always spiritually, yet who often fail to do so. That this was evident to later readers is made apparent by Cervantes's famous statement about *Celestina* being 'Libro, en mi opinión, divi[no], si encubriera más lo huma[no]'. Even modern critical responses to the text cannot summarise the action of the narrative without recourse to the range of human emotions *Celestina* both portrays and inspires (Pérez Fernández 2013: 3-4).

And yet comparatively little scholarship has so far systematically investigated *Celestina* directly or explicitly through such an ideological framework or done so from the perspective of its reception in the sixteenth century. E. Michael Gerli identifies an 'aversion to broad interpretation' in critical approaches to *Celestina* and notes that scholarship 'has declined […] to confront the larger problematical connection between literature and life, text and context, at the threshold of early modernity' (2011b: 14). Of course, this is not to ignore those scholars whose research approaches *Celestina* thematically, whom Gerli himself references (2011b: 14), such as Alan Deyermond (1993) on female societies; José Antonio Maravall (1964) on social change; Américo Castro (1970), Stephen Gilman (1972) and Francisco Márquez Villanueva (1994) on the *converso* mentality, or indeed a multitude of others who have addressed diverse topics like language (Read 1976, 1978; Gaylord 1991; Palafox 1997), prostitution (Lacarra 1992, 1993), and magic (Russell 1963, 1978; Severin 1995). Rather, criticism of *Celestina* has tended overwhelmingly to interpret it from the perspective of its moment of production. For example, much attention has been paid to the socio-historical circumstances of fifteenth-century Spain (Maravall 1964; Gilman 1972; Ladero

Quesada 1990; Lawrance 1993); or has interpreted *Celestina* according to Rojas's hypothetical viewpoint and intentions, often coming to the conclusion that it has an intended didactic or moral message (Bataillon 1991; Lida de Malkiel 1962; Lawrance 1993).

Valuable as this scholarship undoubtedly is, there is far more to be said about how *Celestina* could have been understood in the context of its sixteenth-century reception, a time when debates about the human condition were ongoing and central to many different strands of thought – literary, philosophical, theological, and social. It may be that *Celestina* has been overlooked for the reasons Vega outlines, mentioned above: perhaps because it does not adhere to the formal expectations of philosophical or theological genres or because the subject does not at first appear to be an *explicit* concern of Rojas, despite his obvious interest in humanity. And yet, though undoubtedly categorised as a work of entertainment by early modern audiences, *Celestina* was nevertheless subject to serious scholarly attention in the Renaissance; Chevalier calls it a 'libro a propósito del cual se discute – sin duda con pasión – y libro sobre el cual suelen reflexionar los doctos' (1976: 139). The *Celestina Comentada*, a mid-sixteenth century extended gloss, is one contemporary example that treats *Celestina* as a text worthy of scholarly examination rather than a representative of 'mere undesirable literature of entertainment' (Russell 1976: 186).[47] Deyermond also mentions 'the team of scholars from the University of Salamanca recruited by

[47] On the *Celestina comentada* see Russell (1976: 180-192) and the recent edition by L. Fothergill-Payne, Fernández Rivera, and P. Fothergill-Payne (2002). The author of the commentary, a jurist, highlights the work's scholarly worth by making links between Rojas and other writers, often jurists (Russell 1976: 192).

the bookseller Simón Borgoñón to produce, what is, at least in part, the first critical edition' (2000: 34; citing Scoles 1975).

Celestina reached the zenith of its popularity during a period of transition from what we think of as the Middle Ages to the early modern period; but this was also a time of dialogue, in which the significance of past conventions and ideologies were being negotiated and reconstituted. Whatever Rojas's intentions, when read against a new horizon created by the evolving discourse about the human condition aspects of his work may be seen in a new light, proposing, as Gerli comments, 'Novel ways of being human in the world' (2011b: 15).

Celestina*'s Interlocutors*

As noted above, the concept of the human condition in medieval and Renaissance thought was wide-ranging, varied, and complex. This study therefore focuses on only several elements. It is divided into three parts, each which addresses a different facet of the central ideological issue. Chapter Two considers self-knowledge and solitude; Chapter Three language and self-fashioning; Chapter Four is split into two interconnected sections: part one looks at agency and the limitations upon freedom; the final section places these discussions into the context of wider debates about the corrupting effects of profane fiction, the value and function of literature, and sixteenth-century approaches to censorship.

Chapter Two uses a triad of authors – Innocent, Petrarch, and Fernán Pérez de Oliva – to illustrate how *Celestina* becomes an interlocutor in the debate about human misery and dignity. It focuses on two specific issues through the characters of Pleberio and Melibea: self-knowledge and solitude. As we shall see, these are intimately connected in medieval and Renaissance discussions of the human condition and lie at the heart of conceptions of man as an individual and yet also as a social being. These themes have received some critical treatment by *Celestina* scholars, whose research provides the starting point for my own. For example, José Luis Canet Vallés (2011: 73-82, 83-96), Consolación Baranda (2004: 66), and Ottavio Di Camillo (1999; 2010) underline *Celestina*'s evident interest in the human condition and include debates about the misery and dignity of man in their discussions but do so from the perspective of late fifteenth-century philosophical debates.[48] Di Camillo argues that the phrase 'dignidad del hombre' – uttered by Sempronio in Act I – is not found in a vernacular text in the fifteenth century before *Celestina*; a usage that he links directly to the circulation of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Oratio de hominis dignitate* from 1486 (Di Camillo 1999: 80; 2010: 114-15, notes 33 and 34). Marcelino V. Amasuno (2011) similarly associates *Celestina* with the *De contemptu mundi* tradition and proposes that the 'Bernardo' referred to by Sempronio in Act I is Bernard of Cluny, supposed author of *De contemptu mundi* (ca. 1140) and a possible source of the

[48] Canet Vallés (2011) argues that *Celestina* was influenced by and engaging critically with late fifteenth-century debates about scholasticism (2011: 30, 53, and in particular pp. 83-96). Di Camillo believes that the *Comedia* responds to the contemporary issue of educational reform (2010; 2012) and intersects with debates between different schools of moral philosophy and ethics, in particular the polemic about Epicureanism (1999). For Baranda (2004), the work's morality stems from its engagement with 'los planteamientos del neoepicureísmo, una corriente de pensamiento menos rara, marginal o heterodoxa en su momento de lo que con el paso de los años se ha podido pensar' (2004: 37-38). See also the earlier essays by Alcalá (1976) and McPheeters (1982) on Neo-Epicurean elements in the *Tragicomedia*.

'antiguo autor'. Julio Rodríguez Puértolas (1976) notes that Rojas's characters are highly conscious of themselves as individuals and the tensions under which they live and operate and José Antonio Maravall identifies in *Celestina* the emergence of the Burckhardian notion of the 'discovery of the individual' (1964: 112). Other readings that stress the pessimistic tone of the work and its engagement with the divine have also constituted topics of scholarly interest, particularly in relation to Pleberio's lament and Melibea's death (Ayllón 1965; Gerli 1976; Rank 1980).[49] My work is indebted to these scholars but approaches these issues from the perspective of *Celestina*'s reception in the sixteenth century.

Medieval views of the human condition and man's nature were rooted in the ascetic *contemptus mundi* tradition, which found its greatest expression in the twelfth-century treatise *De miseria humanae conditionis* (also known as *De contemptu mundi*) by Lothari of Segni, who would later become Pope Innocent III. The view of the human condition and nature in Innocent's treatise is deeply pessimistic, even more so than in earlier texts such as Bernard of Clairvaux's *Meditationes piissimae* and Peter Damian's *Apologeticum de contemptu saeculi*.[50] A compendium of *topos* and commonplaces about the misery and misfortune of man already in circulation rather than an original work, *De miseria* attempts to demonstrate the worthlessness of material things and to persuade readers to flee worldly corruptions and look to life after death, which was to be recompense for terrestrial suffering. Because of the wide currency of its ideas, *De miseria* had an enormous diffusion and influence across Europe and survives in more than six hundred manuscripts (including twenty-three extant manuscripts in the Iberian

[49] Corfis (2001) provides a useful summary of scholarship on Pleberio's lament up to 2000.

[50] See Clúa Ginés (2003: 3).

Peninsula), many printed editions, and prose and verse translations.[51] Innocent conceived of the treatise as a diptych, with part one, which was devoted to man's wretched state, being countered by a second part on man's dignity.[52] This suggested second section was never written. The treatise that he did write, however, acted as a powerful point of reference in the minds of medieval and Renaissance authors: over the course of subsequent centuries an intertextual discourse developed between *De miseria* and many works that sought to resolve the issues it collated.[53]

One of the authors who wrote in direct response to Innocent is Petrarch, whose *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1366), *De vita solitaria* and *Secretum* (both mid-fourteenth century) in particular are associated with the *contemptus mundi* tradition.[54] Petrarch describes the dialogue *De tristitia et miseria*, later included in *De remediis*, as 'nihil est aliud, quam humanae conditionis exquirere dignitatem'.[55] According to Francisco Rico, *Secretum* was associated both by Petrarch and its readers and editors with this tradition: 'las gentes más próximas al pensamiento y al sentimiento petrarquescos no vacilaron en rebautizar al *Secretum* con el título *De*

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[51] Rodríguez Rivas provides details about *De miseria*'s manuscript and print history in Spain (1990: 17-27). On its European diffusion more generally see Bultot (1964).

[52] Innocent states in his prologue: 'dignitatem humane nature Christo favente describam, quatinus ita per hoc humilietur elatus, ut per illud humilis exaltetur' (Innocent 1955: 3) ['I will describe, with Christ's aid, the dignity of human nature, so that just as in this book the haughty man is humbled, so in the next the humble man may be exalted' (Innocent 1980: 92)].

[53] Clúa Ginés calls *De miseria* an 'intertext' (2003: 6). Other authors who wrote in direct response to Innocent were Antonio da Barga, Bartolomeo Facio, Giannozzo Manetti, Aurelio Brandolini, and Fernán Pérez de Oliva (Trinkaus 1970: 174; Vega 2003, 2011).

[54] On the manuscript reception of *De Remediis* see Mann (1971) and for data about its print history see Hankins (2007-2008). *Secretum* informed Petrarch's later thoughts on Fortune but never reached the same level of diffusion as *De remediis*.

[55] '[N]othing else but inquiring into the dignity of the human condition' (Petrarca 1991: II, xviii); see also Rico (1974: 170, n. 161).

contemptu mundi' (1974: 95). Elements of the discourse about man's misery come to *Celestina* through Petrarch and are evident in the *Tragicomedia*'s marked pessimism. The debt owed to Petrarch by Rojas has been examined in detail by Deyermond (2003 [1961]). My aim in Chapter Two is not to develop his ideas about how Petrarch's *De remediis* shaped the meaning of *Celestina* but to consider how *Celestina* moves beyond the meanings of the discussion suggested by Innocent and Petrarch.[56] Self-knowledge and solitude are issues of great concern for both Innocent and Petrarch; they are also fundamental in another sixteenth-century text that provides a useful comparison with *Celestina*: the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* by Fernán Pérez de Oliva (1546).

In contrast to the scholarship that has linked Rojas and Petrarch, there has to my knowledge been no comparative study of the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* and *Celestina*. Consolación Baranda is so far the only scholar I have come across who has mentioned the two works in relation to each other; she writes that

> Las palabras de Aurelio ofrecen significativas coincidencias con el punto de vista de Rojas porque desarrollan también la primera parte del libro VII de la *Historia Natural* de Plinio. Aurelio ofrece un desolador panorama de la condición humana, desgranando los distintos aspectos de la *miseria hominis* en términos que coinciden con el prólogo de *La Celestina*. (2004: 66)

Yet, as Baranda's comment expresses, there are good reasons why this later work makes a particularly valuable interlocutor in the context of discussions about

[56] Sixteenth-century readers clearly associated Petrarch and Rojas, as can be seen in the *Celestina comentada*; however, the commentator's major concern is with the use of Petrarch as a source, rather than an interpretative tool. See Lage Cotos (2005).

misery and dignity.[57] In circulation alongside the *Tragicomedia* in both Spain and Italy, the *Diálogo* was edited by Francisco Cervantes de Salazar and included in a collection of other works printed in 1546, and later re-edited by Pérez de Oliva's nephew, Ambrosio de Morales (1586).[58] It was translated into Italian by Alfonso de Ulloa in 1563, a man also closely associated with *Celestina*'s appropriation in Italy as well as the translation of culture between the two peninsulas more generally, and went through several editions there (see Appendix 2).

Oliva's work is a dialogue about the two sides to man's condition between two interlocutors: Aurelio who argues for his misery, and Antonio, who defends his excellence. This debate takes place before a third party, Dinarco, whose role it is to weigh up their arguments and pass judgment. The content of their discussions are not particularly original, comprising ideas and conventions taken not only from Innocent, but other fifteenth-century and early sixteenth-century texts about the human condition. The *Diálogo* is unusual for its time, however, because it presents both sides to the argument in the one text. It furthermore approaches the issue from a similarly ambiguous position as *Celestina*, providing a paradoxical perspective that demonstrates at once man's simultaneous potential for dignity and misery. Similarly to *De miseria*, the *Diálogo* is presented as a catalyst that enables man to recognise the truth about his condition and consequently

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[57] On the *Diálogo*'s print history, outlined in Appendix 2, see Cerrón Puga (1995: 11-97, particularly pp. 43-57) and Vega (2009: particularly pp. 106-114). Vega calls it 'una de las obras capitales de la literatura sobre el hombre en el Renacimiento europeo' (2009: 106) and notes that it is also undoubtedly informed by *De miseria* (2009: 126; 2011: 19-21).

[58] The 1546 edition also includes Luis Mexía's *Apólogo de la ociosidad y el trabajo intitulado Labricio Portundo* and Juan Luis Vives's *Introducción y camino para la sabiduría*. Morales's 1586 edition prints it alongside a *Discurso de la Lengua Castellana* (based on the 1546 prologue by Morales), *Quince discursos*, *La Devisa para el Señor don Juan de Austria*, and the translation of the *Tabla de Cebes*, some poems by his nephew Augustín de Oliva, and the *Discurso sobre el temor de la muerte y el amor y desseo de la vida y representación de la gloria del cielo* by Pedro Vallés.

amend his behaviour: 'para reconoscer los dones y beneficios que de Dios recebimos para emendar nuestras faltas y poquedades para doctrina enseñamiento de nuestras vidas' (1546: fol. lxxx[r]).[59] Yet, as we will see in the chapter, the *Diálogo*'s first editor, Cervantes de Salazar, modifies certain elements in order to underline only one aspect of the human condition: dignity.[60] Like *Celestina*, therefore, the *Diálogo* exists on a continuum between reception and creativity, inspiring an ongoing dialogue with later readers. Using the *Diálogo* an interlocutor, I trace how *Celestina* moves beyond its medieval reference points and how new meanings come to light when it is read in new ideological horizons, such as the possibility of disbelief that was being explored in some sixteenth-century texts. As we will see, while there was a tendency to resolve or gloss over the ambiguities of both the *Diálogo* and *Celestina*, the effect of reading these two works alongside one another could have been to keep alive these very uncertainties in the minds of those familiar with both texts. Rather like the subversive *apartes* of its untrustworthy marginal characters, *Celestina* provides an anamorphic perspective on the issues of self-knowledge and the growing issue of disbelief.

Chapter Three looks at language as one of the defining features of human dignity and its role in the formation of self and society with particular focus on the concept of courtliness. It uses Baldassar Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528),

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[59] It cannot be confidently stated whether such rubrics were added according to the wishes of Cervantes de Salazar or by the printers, who often made such adjustments, as the *argumentos* in *Celestina* attest. If the latter, this brings an additional layer of participation in the multi-stranded discourse that characterises the reception of this work.

[60] Morales purges Cervantes de Salazar's changes but retains his *argumento* and the ending that emphasises man's dignity (Baranda 2003a: 22).

another early modern European 'best-seller', as the primary interloctuor. *Celestina*'s popularity coincides with a period when language was at the forefront of intellectual and social concern. In the sixteenth century there was an increasing interest in speech, oratory, rhetoric, and the art of 'good conversation'. Belief in the importance of language to man's dignity can be seen in Antonio de Nebrija's *Gramática Castellana* (1492), in which he writes that 'Entre las primeras [artes] es aquella que nos enseña la lengua la cual nos aparta de todos los otros animales: y es propia del ombre y en orden la primera despues de la contemplación' (1980: 99 [CHECK]).

The way in which language is used and represented in *Celestina* was clearly a factor in its success, as Lucia Binotti's research on the links between the text's appropriation in Italy and the *questione della lingua* has argued (2007). Rojas and the characters of *Celestina* have been described by critics as being obsessed or preoccupied with language, and highly aware of their status as speaking subjects (Azar 1984: 33; Read 1978: 64; Gaylord 1991: 5, 9). A considerable amount of scholarship from Stephen Gilman (1956) onwards has tackled language and its interrelationship with other factors. Key areas addressed have been *Celestina*'s rhetorical character (Morgan 1979; Fraker 1990; Friedman 1993) and performative nature (Gilman 1956; Azar 1984) – often with reference to the issues of identity and courtliness (Deyermond 1961; Martin 1972; Severin 1989; Gatland 2007). Scholars have also paid particular attention to the power of language, especially in conjunction with sorcery (Gifford 1981; Valbuena 1994; Palafox 1997). In this study I re-contextualise these arguments in light of wider socio-historical and theoretical discussions, such as Elizabeth Horodowich's exploration of the social uses of language in early modern Venice (2008), as well

as Stephen Greenblatt's notion of 'self-fashioning' (1980), which despite its flaws provides a useful framework to approach the interrelations of self, society, and speech.[61] While scholars have often viewed language as a vehicle of representation that exists separately from the 'real' world (Read 1976; Azar 1984; Severin 1989; Brocato 1996), I propose an alternative approach that investigates language using the materialist theories of linguists like V. N. Voloshinov and Mikhail Bakhtin, in order to conceptualise the way in which self and society are constructed in and through words.

With the exception of Ricardo Castells's *Renaissance Vision* (2000) very little attention has been paid to the bibliographic and thematic confluences in Rojas's and Castiglione's works.[62] However a comparative reading is justified for several reasons. Firstly, as Appendix 2 demonstrates, the two texts circulated concurrently in both Peninsulas, in both Italian and a Castilian translation by Juan Boscán (1534), which was widely feted by Renaissance and modern critics alike for its clarity and stylistic elegance.[63] The possibility that readers owned both texts simultaneously and read them alongside one another should not be dismissed. Rojas himself owned a copy of Castiglione's book, which he left to

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[61] Greenblatt has been accused of ignoring earlier medieval instances of self-fashioning (Aers 1992: 191-192), and gender (Weissberger 2012: 501).

[62] Castells devotes a chapter to exploring how Pietro Bembo's description of *inamorati* could be used to explain Calisto's love-sickness (2000: 79-92). His comparative study reads *Celestina* against a seventeenth-century work (Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 1621) and alongside Castiglione, but does so in order to discuss the traditions that influenced *Celestina*'s production.

[63] Morreale provides an in depth study of Boscán's translation, including detailed discussions not only of the changes he made, but the social and political context of some key terminology, such as terms and ideas like 'civil' and 'cortesano' among others. See also Reyes Cano (2009: 57-64).

his son upon his death.[64] And, at a slightly different end of the social scale, Manuel Peña gives the example of a locksmith who bought copies of both *Celestina* and *El cortesano* at auction (1996: 215). Peña focuses only on Catalonia but it is not impossible to assume that the profile of readers elsewhere Spain and Italy would be similar to a large, mercantile urban centre such as Barcelona. Interestingly, the 1506 translation of *Celestina* by Alfonso de Ordóñez was dedicated to and apparently made at the request of Gentile Feltria de Campofregoso, the illegitimate daughter of Federico da Montefeltro, father to the Duke of Urbino in whose court Castiglione's work is set.[65]

Secondly, Castiglione is, like Rojas, interested in the self-conscious creation and representation of self-hood, a process that takes place through and in language.[66] And, as we shall see, Boscán was no less concerned with the relationship between language and *civilità*, selfhood and society. His paratextual material clearly situates *El Cortesano* in a context in which the relationship between the individual and wider social structures as mediated by language was being considered. Written between 1513 and 1518, *Il Cortegiano* is a nostalgic depiction of Urbino around 1507. It depicts an array of over twenty noblemen and women, poets, and scholars – all contemporary historical personages – and is formed of four books, each in four acts. The ostensible topic of discussion is the perfect courtier, but Books Two to Four address several other large themes: the corresponding 'perfect' court lady, the politics of the court, and Platonic

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[64] Valle Lersundi (1929: 382, 387); cited in Deyermond (2003 [1961]: 36). Rojas owned a copy of the Toledan 1539 edition.

[65] See Paolini (2011).

[66] Burke, for example, relates the concept of *sprezzatura* to increasing interest in 'self-consciousness' or 'the presentation of the self' (1995: 31-32).

love.[67] Importantly, Castiglione's dialogue is framed by a discussion about language and the conventions of speech and writing expected of the courtier. For this reason, *Il Cortegiano* provides a useful counterpoint and comparison to *Celestina*. Both texts are concerned with the relationship between language, self and society. Like the Italian work, *Celestina* engages with contemporary preoccupations about courtliness and the problems and potential of language. Though dealing with a range of subjects, the overall aim of the debates in Castiglione's dialogue is to identify how to 'formar con parole un perfetto cortegiano' – to form with words the perfect courtier. This phrase forms the starting point for Chapter Three's investigation. Building on existing scholarship that reads their depiction as parodies of earlier medieval tropes, this chapter considers Calisto and Melibea's fashioning of courtly identities in their urban world as a lens through which to address the intersecting issues of language, self, and society. In the context of its sixteenth-century reception, *Celestina*'s representation of these issues goes beyond its medieval origins to question not only the civilising powers of discourse but also the ability of language to construct ways of being that are lasting and social cohesion.

Chapter Four focuses on the dialectic between freedom and constraint inherent in the human condtion. Another key tenet of man's supposed dignity was his status as a being with agency and free will who was capable of choosing between right and wrong. Arguments in favour of human dignity and excellence glorified man as a creature of possibility and positive transformation, who had the ability

[67] For an overview of the topics discussed in each Book, see Reyes Cano (2009: 22-49); and Burke (1995: 27-28).

to choose who and what he became, as seen in Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's celebrated defence of 900 theses given in 1486, now commonly known as the *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, or Juan Luis Vives's *Fabula de homine* (1518), which represents man as a skilful actor who can play the roles of all creatures, low to high, even God.[68] In this case-study I address this issue from the bottom-up of society, from the perspective of the symbolic figure of the Prostitute.[69] The chapter's primary interlocutor is Pietro Aretino's *La vita delle puttane* (1534), and its translation into Spanish by Fernán Xuárez, the *Coloquio de las damas* (1547), though I also consider writings by the courtesan Veronica Franco (1580).

While previous scholars of *Celestina* have addressed freedom and constraint with reference to Fortune and magic (Gilman 1956; Berndt 1963; Maravall 1964; Moore 1964; Wardropper 1964; Casa 1968), I approach the issue through less abstract elements such as gender, and economic and social status; it has been suggested that there were two renaissances, 'one sumptuous and aristocratic, the other sordid and plebeian' (Moravia 2005: ix). In this respect I take my cues from Maravall, who also addresses agency from a social standpoint. Maravall, however, attributes this to a supposed burgeoning of bourgeoisie individualism (1964: 112-113) – a viewpoint I reject in favour of a more broadly existential and humanistic approach. Studies of the prostitutes and prostitution in *Celestina* have analysed their character development (Lida de Malkiel 1962; Hathaway 1994; Morros Mestres 2010); explored their relationship to the socio-

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[68] See Kristeller and Randall (1948: 19). Fernández-Santamaría discusses some of the differences between Pico and Vives's representations of human freedom (1998: 9).

[69] The topic of female emancipation and agency has been addressed previously with regards to religious women by scholars such as Arenal (1983: 149) and Weber (1996: 11, 15), who view the convent as a catalyst for feminine autonomy and as a covert strategy of empowerment.

historical context of prostitution in fifteenth-century Castile (Lacarra 1990, 1992, 1993; Hook 1999; Abril-Sánchez 2007; Morros Mestres 2010); and also traced their influence upon later literature, seeing them as archetypes for later portrayals (Lida de Malkiel 1962; Hsu 2002). Very little criticism has sought to place the depiction of these women in a wider ideological context or considered their symbolic importance; and few, with the exception of Lida de Malkiel and Hsu, have sought to approach these issues from the perspective of *Celestina*'s reception.[70] As this chapter will show, however, *Celestina*'s representation of the prostitute is far more challenging than much existing criticism has so far considered.

Literary portrayals of prostitutes and prostitution were more often than not mediated by men. Yet, while documented female writers in Spain are few, *Celestina*'s reception in sixteenth-century Italy coincides with a surge in poetic and epistolary works written by noblewomen and *cortegiane honeste*. Among these women is Veronica Franco, a famed courtesan known also for her poetry and letters, printed as *Lettere familiari a diversi* (1580).[71] While Franco's writings are quite often placed alongside Aretino's portrayals of courtesans, there has, to my knowledge, been no comparison with *Celestina*, a fact I find interesting given the latter's success in a city-state that placed such ideological and symbolic importance on the figure of the courtesan. Franco's writing provides a valuable

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[70] Gerli highlights the scarcity of *Celestina* scholarship that has addressed issues such as sex, love, the body, prostitution, and morality in the context of wider cultural and ideological contexts (2011b: 165).

[71] It is difficult to confirm whether Franco's work was known outside of Italy, either in manuscript or print. Her *Lettare famliari a diversi* were most probably printed in Venice, but no printer's name is given, and there is no 'privilegio'. Given the fact that she is believed to have self-financed their printing, it is likely that the number of copies was small and that they circulated locally in Venice. One copy survives in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in Venice [VEAE128287].

historical perspective on the prostitute in Italian Renaissance society, and a commentary upon the literary works to be discussed alongside *Celestina*: Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* and its translation, the *Coloquio de las damas*.

Branded a sodomite and a 'scourge of princes', Pietro Aretino was well-known for the erotic and political nature of his writings, which were widely known about outside of Italy even before they were disseminated.[72] His *Ragionamenti* were composed in two parts that circulated separately until the late sixteenth century: the *Ragionamento* (1534), of which *La vita delle puttane* is the third dialogue, and the *Dialogo* (1536).[73] As a whole they portray a series of conversations that take place over six days between women of low social and economic status – Nanna, a former prostitute and go-between, and a younger prostitute, Antonia; Pippa, Nanna's daughter, a midwife, and a wetnurse. The interlocutors are, like those of *Celestina*, 'women who were deeply mistrustful and scornful of pretentious, misogynist, and vindictive male intellectuals' (M. Rosenthal 2005: xv). According to the *incipit*, the *Ragionamento* seeks to reveal and 'correct' the vices and treachery of women; within the framework of the narrative, however, the aim of the work as presented to us by its interlocutors is to discuss the options available to women in order to decide which 'profession' Nanna's daughter Pippa should follow: Nun, Wife, or Whore. *La vita delle puttane* was the most successful of the six individual dialogues and the only one to have

[72] See M. Rosenthal's introduction (2005: xi).

[73] Bàrberi Squarotti notes that 'La situazione testuale è complessa a causa della rarità delle stampe cinquecentesche e del prolifarare di ristampe puramente divulgative' (1988: 59). The two parts were not printed as one cohesive unit until 1584, when they were published in London by John Wolf. See López Barbadillo (1917: 124-125).

been printed independently as a separate work in both Italy and Spain (see Appendix 2).[74]

There has been some scholarly interest in the relationship between Aretino's work, the *Coloquio*, and the *Tragicomedia*; however, much of this has tended to concentrate on genetic influence and sources or stylistic and linguistic elements in order to argue for *Celestina*'s direct influence upon Aretino and Xuárex and suggest that both later authors consciously sought to make links between it and their own writings (Vian Herrero 2003: 325-331; López Barbadillo 1917: 139; Gagliardi 2011: xxvi-xxviii). Since my aim is not to compare *Celestina*'s influence upon the composition of Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* and Xuárez's *Coloquio* but rather to consider how it could have been understood when read alongside them, foregrounding new nuances and meanings, I will not reiterate the details of their arguments here. My approach differs in that I read them against one another as independent texts without seeking to establish genetic connections of influence.

Aretino's *Vita delle putane* is a satirical, licentious, and irreverent look at the nature and roles of women. Like *Celestina*, it provides a similarly cutting and raucous view of life from the point of view of the margins and plays with norms and conventions. Yet it also demonstrates a serious concern for understanding the human condition. Indeed, the entire *Ragionamenti* have been conceived as parodies of the sort of Platonistic dialogues in which the activities and character of man are discussed in order to perfect and prescribe the most excellent aspects of the human condition. According to Bàrbieri Squarotti,

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[74] For bibliographic descriptions of the Italian and Spanish editions, see Gagliardi (2011: 161-167). Also on the translation of the *Vita delle puttane* and the *Coloquio*'s print history are Vian Herrero (2003: 332-333) and Rhodes (1989: 138-141).

> L'Aretino si inserisce, con il *Ragionamento* e il *Dialogo*, in questa concezione della letteratura come catalogazione e illustrazione di tutte le possibili attività dell'uomo, da cui nulla deve restare fuori perché non se corra il rischio della sorpresa, della confusione, del capovolgimento delle previsioni e della ragione. (1988: 14)

Vian Herrero, too, states that it 'permite la reflexión y confrontación de ideas, la ejemplificación demostrativa de los asuntos teóricos más intricados, puede aclarar y definir todos los ámbitos posibles de la actividad humana' (2003: 341). And yet instead of featuring only members of the social and intellectual elite, like Rojas Aretino involves the lowliest, most marginal, and morally repugnant. The association with Platonic dialogue is raised in relation to *Celestina* by Nicolas Round but quickly dismissed by the scholar. Round is ultimately unwilling to ascribe to this idea on the grounds that it is unlikely that Rojas could have read Plato's *Symposium* before 1500 or that his readers would have been receptive to such a parody.[75] However, when dealing with the reception of *Celestina* it is irrelevant whether Rojas read them or wrote the *Tragicomedia* with them in mind. A comparative reading of *Celestina* against later works that were received in an environment conscious of this form, such as Aretino's dialogue, would have made this aspect more obvious.[76]

A 'complex work that addresses a host of social issues' (Moulton 2000: 153), among them the condition of women, men's treatment of them, church corruption, marriage, and the nature of service, Aretino's *Vita delle puttane*

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[75] See Round (1993: 105-106); and Fothergill-Payne (1993: 38).

[76] *Celestina*'s popularity in sixteenth-century Italy coincided with a period in which Plato and Platonic forms of literary discourse were widely known and translated. See Hankins (1990); and Snyder (1989).

exemplifies the fluidity of ideologies and discourses between Italy and Spain outlined in the methodological exposition. It is also an example of the evolution of meaning that texts undergo when translated to different times and places. In fact, Ian Moulton compares it to 'that other socially complex and multivalent dialogue from Renaissance Italy, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*', arguing that its 'nuanced views of social issues were radically simplified in transmission' (2000: 153). Indeed, in its appropriation to Spain *La vita delle puttane* takes on a rather different character, as Joaquín López Barbadillo (1917: 139-143, 166), Gloria Guidotti (1986: 251, 254-256), Ana Vian Herrero (2003: 337-345), and Donatella Gagliardi, in her recent edition and study of the translation (2011: xv-xxxi), have all variously shown. Xuárez expunges much erotic detail and linguistic obscenity, as well as much of *La vita delle puttane*'s clear anti-clericalism, religious irreverence, and profanity (Gagliardi 2011: xix-xxv; Vian Herrero 2003: 338, 343, notes 54-56, 344). However, even trivial details are adapted to suit the tastes of a Spanish audience (López Barbadillo 1917: 139).[77] Nanna herself is renamed 'Lucrecia', and her daughter is exercised from the work completely, a modification that transforms its thematic focus. For, with the disappearance of Pippa, who acts as 'il fulcro dell'azione', Xuárez's translation becomes

> del tutto avulso dall'antefatto della storia, con un'autonomia totale dalle due precedenti giornate, che rischiava di disorientare un lettore poco informato sulla fisionomia primordiale dell'opera aretiniana. (Gagliardi 2011: xxi)

[77] On the hispanisation of even small details in the work, including colours and currency, proper names, places, and the Petrarchan verses that Nanna spouts, see Gagliardi (2011: xvi-xviii).

Whether by design or circumstance, by only translating the *giornata* that deals with prostitutes, Xuárez singles out this group of women alone for criticism and changes the symbolic function of the prostitute.[78]

His translation has not always been favourably received by modern critics. Vian Herrero labels it 'una de las traiciones más vistosas de la historia de la traducción' if judged against modern philological criteria (2003: 337), and López Barbadillo remarks that 'más bien se tomaría ésta [la traducción] por remedo que por copia' (1917: 138). His use of the term 'remedo' is a fitting one, given the thematic preoccupations with contagion that Xuárez reveals. For, the Spanish translator seeks to mitigate what he saw as a latent threat or danger contained in the work symbolised by the prostitute. As I will discuss in the final section of the study, Xuárez's re-framing transforms the *Coloquio* from a general consideration of the condition of women, to a very specific association between corrupting women and corrupting books. Like so many works of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance, *Celestina* represents a search for truth about the human condition that takes place through the medium of vernacular literature. It is, in addition to many things, a work about the processes and problems of writing and reading. The concluding section of Chapter Four returns to the issues of interpretation and the evolution of meaning as texts move across boundaries of time, place, and thought with which the study opened.

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[78] There is discussion about whether the decision to translate only the *terza giornata* stems from an active choice on Xuárez's part or is a result of the fact that this was the only section available to him. See López Barbadillo (1917: 124-125), and Vian Herrero (2003: 331-333). A Parisian edition (1540) in which the *Terza Giornata* was printed alongside days four and six of the *Dialogo* is also known about (Gagliardi 2011: 166-167).

2. Self-knowledge and Solitude: The Misery and Dignity of Man

'Nosce te ipsum'

Medieval and Renaissance concepts of what it meant to be human invoke the need for self-awareness, to 'humillarse y reconocerse' (Covarrubias 2006: 1078). Summed up by the popular Latin tag 'Nosce te ipsum', or 'Know Thyself', the concept of self-knowledge has its origins in Greek philosophy and involves the idea that the search for truth had to originate from an understanding of oneself.[1] In medieval Christian and ascetic traditions the point of this quest for self-knowledge was unity with God. For example, Hugh of St. Victor writes in the *Didascalicon de studio legendi* that 'ascendere ad deum hoc est intrare ad semetipsum et non solum ad se intrare sed ineffabili quodam modo in intimis etiam se ipsum transire'[2]; and the pseudo-Bernardian *Meditationes Piissimae de cognitione conditionis humanae* advises 'Stude cognoscere te; quam multo melior et laudabilior es si te cognoscis quam si te neglecto cosnesceres cursum siderum'.[3] Self-knowledge also appears in the prologue to Hernán Núñez's 1499 commentary on Juan de Mena's *Laberinto de fortuna.* Here it is glossed by Núñez, who cites Lactantius Firmianus's statement that "'Pravitatis causa est ignoratio sui" (la causa de todo peccado y error es la ignorancia de sý mismo)', thereby positioning it as a sort of

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[1] Bennett (1982) and Aers (1992) provide information about the classical works and authors upon which medieval and Renaissance ideas about self-knowledge were based.

[2] 'To ascend to God is to enter into oneself and not only to enter but in an inexpressible way to penetrate into one's inmost being' (cited in Bennett 1982: 138-39, n. 6).

[3] 'Study to know thyself. How much better and more estimable it is if thou knowest thyself than if thou study the courses of the constellations and neglect theyself' (cited in Bennett 1982: 146).

coping mechanism or strategy for overcoming spiritual and earthly difficulties (fortune, age, illness, slander or subjugation to any other force).[4]

In the Renaissance this idea continued to hold sway with Neo-Platonists such as Marsilio Ficino, who believed that knowledge, like love, unified the subject and the world and, to quote Ernst Cassirer, strove 'to overcome the separation in the elements of being and return to the point of their original unity' (1963: 134) – a sentiment that underlines the integrity, harmony, and sense of proportion thought to exist between man and the created order. This can be found in Ficino's letters and *Theologia Platonica*, where he observes that nothing is more natural to the mind than knowledge of the self.[5] The image of self in works such as these was a

> contemplative ideal with clear moral implications dominated by the spiritual experience of an inner ascent that leads the soul through several degrees of knowledge and of love to the immediate vision of God. (Murchland 1966: xvii-xviii)

By definition, then, the quest for self-knowledge entailed the necessary exclusion of external elements, or, as David Aers comments, 'a move from the outer person to the inner' (1992: 183); it required that man isolate himself and become blind to the trappings of the world around him. Bernard Murchland, however, conceptualizes solitude as a *consequence* of the failure to fully and willingly accept

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[4] Cited in the preliminary edition available through *eHumanista* by Weiss and Cortijo Ocaña (2008: 1: 16; 2: 44-49). Reflecting a new trend in vernacular Humanism, like *Celestina* the commentary was disseminated among a non-academic audience in the vernacular.

[5] 'Quid enim menti naturalius, quam sui ipsius cognitio' ['what can be more natural to the mind than knowledge of oneself'] (*Epistolae*, i. fol. 628; cited in Cassirer 1963: 131).

the truth about oneself rather than being part of the process by which it is found: man

> may either pursue the path of self-identity, meaning, and wholeness; or, on the other hand, he may continue to stumble through the 'unending labyrinths' of destruction and alienation. (1966: xix)

Murchland suggests a familiar polarisation: man can choose *either* to be one thing *or* another. When we involve *Celestina* as an interlocutor in this debate, however, it becomes clear that this binary opposition is not so simple. One form of solitude may facilitate self-knowledge but self-knowledge can also lead to another, less comforting, form of solitude: not that of the philosopher, freed from worldly affairs, but existential alienation, loneliness, and estrangement.[6]

The process of acquiring self-knowledge was believed to be a means to truth and the first step in escaping man's miserable state. Innocent's aim in *De miseria* was to show his readers the truth about human nature, thereby encouraging them to turn to the divine and find humility and, through this, salvation.[7] Ascetic meditation of the type seen in his treatise attacks worldly distractions and vices such as pride because their effect is to make man 'ignorante de su naturaleza y olvidadizo de su fragilidad. El copioso discurso de las miserias humanas no tendría otro fin que el de recordársela de forma incesante' (Vega

[6] On the idea of alienation in Renaissance culture see Howard (1974: 48-49) and Vega (2009: 121-122); and in relation to *Celestina*, see Rodríguez Puértolas (1976: 158-163) and Gerli (2011a: 23).

[7] See Vega (2011: 5).

2011: 7).[8] In order to bring about the contempt necessary for humility man had to be brought to a thorough understanding of the deceits of the world, but most importantly of the vileness of humanity: Innocent declares that wise men who spend their lives seeking knowledge externally, in and through the world, seek it in vain, because the truth (and therefore the way to exalt God) lies within: 'Deficiunt ergo scrutantes scrutinium, quoniam accedit homo ad cor altum, et exaltabitur Deus' (1980: 111).[9]

This interiorisation of the search for truth is also found in works that responded to Innocent's provocative treatise. And while such responses did not necessarily take the same approach, often they did share motifs. Petrarch is one such example in whose work self-knowledge and solitude are interwoven. Armando Maggi states that the real issue in *De vita solitaria*, for example,

> is not solitude but rather the pursuit of 'immortal truth' (*immortalis veritas*) in sharp contrast to the 'falsity' (*fictio*) and 'deceit' (*mendacium*) of the world [...] Petrarch sees solitude as a synonym for revealed truth: 'every secret is in time disclosed; the shadows depart' (cf. 1 Cor. 4:5: 'The Lord will bring to light everything that is hidden in darkness'). Solitude evokes an apocalyptic expectation. Revealed truth, nature, and solitude are three terms defining one and only one experience. (2009: 183)

[8] Resonances of this incessant reminder of what man is can be found in other late medieval texts, even those not traditionally associated with the discourses about the human condition such as Jorge Manrique's *Coplas*, also a sixteenth-century 'best-seller', whose opening line 'Recuerde el alma dormida' seeks a similar awakening. On which see Marino (2011).

[9] 'The searchers have failed in their search, because man shall come to a deep heart, and God shall be exalted' (Innocent 1980: 110).

The injunction 'know thyself' also directly informs the message of several dialogues in both books of *De remediis*.[10] Petrarch advocates, as Innocent does, that the only truly useful knowledge is that about the self, as Reason explains in the dialogue 'De Sapientia' ['Wisdom']: 'Hoc est proprium sapientis, imperfectionem suam nosse ac fateri' (2002: I, 1, 62).[11] Sorrow's statement of hatred against the world in the dialogue 'De dolore malis ex hominum moribus concepto' ['Being Depressed by the Ways of the World'] is met with Reason's impassioned exhortation to turn away from the world and focus on the perfection of the self:

> Quin tu mundo suos mores linque, tuos reformare stude, et ab aliis aversos, in te ipsum oculos reflecte. Sic et tedium evaseris, et, cum, mundum nequeas, id quod potes et debes, temet ipsum corriges. Non est quod te frustra natum credas, si hoc feceris. (Petrarca 2002: I, 2, 926)[12]

Both Innocent and Petrarch acknowledge, albeit in different ways, that the path to self-knowledge does not exist in a vacuum but is conditioned by contextual factors such as wealth, material comfort, or social ties; in other words, it cannot

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[10] *Secretum* is similarly concerned with self-knowledge, on which see Tripet (1967), Rico (1974), Quillen (1998), and Zak (2010). A self-conscious examination of Petrarch's relationship with the divine, it is an example of the author's Christian humanism and deals with the necessity of free will in faith.

[11] 'The hallmark of a wise man [is] to know his imperfection and to admit it.' (Petrarca 1991: I, 34). Unless otherwise stated all citations from *De remediis* in Latin are taken from Carraud's edition (Petrarca 2002), and volume, book, and page numbers will be given in parentheses in the main body of text. English translations are taken from Rawski's edition (Petrarca 1991); references are to volume and page.

[12] 'Why don't you leave to the world its ways and try to improve your own. Turn your eyes away from other people and look at yourself. Thus you avoid disgust and, though you cannot improve the world, you improve at least yourself, which you can and should do. And once you do this, you have no more reason to think that you were born in vain' (Petrarca 1991: III, 208).

be separated from one's engagement with the world and others. Innocent tends not to address these factors directly in much detail but there is a sense in the work that withdrawal from the world also means retreat from society. As Murchland notes, *De miseria* displays a 'solitary contempt of man and the created order' (1966: xvi). The twelfth-century cleric shows relatively little interest in man as a *social* being. On the few occasions when he depicts human relationships (such as those between master and servant, man and wife) he represents them as troublesome burdens that ensnare man in sinful passions and draw him deeper into the world; or as part of the general environment of conflict and strife, one of the many enemies that man faces, and therefore barriers to self-knowledge.

Though undoubtedly forming part of contemporary debates about the misery and dignity of man, Petrarch's conceptualisation of the human condition responded to and was conditioned by a different social context to that of the penitential or ascetic environment with which *De miseria* is associated. We find greater consideration of man as a social being in *De remediis*, probably because Petrarch was more interested in providing guidance and consolation for situations readers could potentially face in their own lives. As such, the positive side of social relationships is often underlined: for example, in the dialogue 'De Vicinis Importunis' ['Troublesome Neighbours'] man is called 'politicum et sociale animal' (Petrarca 2002: I, 2, 706), after Aristotle's definition of man as 'zoon politikon'.[13] This engagement (direct or indirect) with Aristotelian ideas of self and society is what links Petrarch and Rojas.[14] Nevertheless, Petrarch counters this idea with the admission that true understanding of self and world requires

[13] Petrarca (1991: III, 2, 88).

[14] Deyermond has highlighted the close attention paid to the concept of man as a social being in *Celestina* (2003 [1961]: 45).

isolation, admitting in the same dialogue that of all species in the world, humans alone are defined by consistent conflict, and offering a familiar list of the torments that arise from social interactions.[15] The dialogue ends with the advice that 'Si penitus ab hac peste vis absolvi, in solitudinem te reconde' (Petrarca 2002: I, 2, 706), a message that echoes earlier discussion in 'De Viridariis' ['Green Places'], where Reason poses the rhetorical question to Joy that 'Quanto autem gloriosius arido in rure exul Scipio Africanus vixerat quam suis in voluptatibus princeps ille Romanus?' (Petrarca 2002: I, 1, 280).[16]

The *topos* of fleeing to the countryside to escape the chaos of the city was a literary commonplace in vernacular texts by the sixteenth century, as illustrated by Antonio de Guevara's *Menosprecio de corte y alabanza del aldea* (1539), in Latin the *Vitae rusticae encomium*, another widely translated European 'bestseller'. And it provides a peaceful pastoral setting for another work devoted to exploring what it meant to be human: the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* by Pérez de Oliva. Here solitude is introduced at the very start as a philosophical statement that frames the subsequent discussion and underlines the message that to arrive at the truth about man's condition requires isolation from worldly distractions. This rhetorical setting is entirely conventional, and it allows Pérez de Oliva to make

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[15] A common motif in works that dealt with the human condition, such torments are listed in *De miseria* and are a feature of the prologue to the *Tragicomedia*.

[16] 'If you want to be completely free of this social pest, you will have to hide in the wilderness' (Petrarca 1991: III, 88-89); 'Did not Scipio Africanus live more gloriously in the arid countryside as an exile than this Roman prince in all his voluptuousness?' (Petrarca 1991: I, 174). In addition, see the dialogues 'De celebritate nominis importuna' ['The Burden of Fame']: 'Si quod est aliud remedium, urbium fuga est' (Petrarca 2002: I, 2, 920) ['If there is a remedy, it is flight from the city' (Petrarca 1991: I, 205)]; and 'De gloria' ['Glory']: 'Melius forsitan lateres et certe tutius. Hoc graviter dixit is, qui multa leviter: *Bene qui latuit bene vixit*' (Petrarca 2002: I, 1, 398) ['It would probably be better for you, and certainly safer, if you were in hiding. He, who said so much in jest, said this in earnest: "He who hid well, has lived well"' (Petrarca 1991: I, 246)].

the link between self-knowledge and solitude even more explicit. However, having established the general context, the actual meaning of, and relationship between, these two concepts then varies according to the perspective of each interlocutor in the dialogue: Aurelio, who argues for man's misery, and Antonio, who argues for his dignity. For Antonio, as for Innocent and Petrarch, solitude is healing and edifying; it represents a space of creativity and reflection, and provides necessary respite from war and all the other conflicts that beset human life and interactions. In contrast, for Aurelio the necessity of solitude stems from the abhorrence man feels towards others. By employing such a strongly negative term as 'aborrecimiento', Aurelio's speech surpasses the approach of the earlier works by suggesting that there is nothing to be gained by social interactions. Interestingly, a marginal note printed in Cervantes de Salazar's edition indicates that Aurelio's statement here represents the 'Argumento del dialogo' (1546: fol. 2r).[17] The *ladillo* was a common device in early printed editions, guiding readers through an argument and drawing their attention to the key ideas for them to memorise. Here it reinforces the centrality of solitude to subsequent arguments that seek to uncover the truth about the human condition.

Though direct reference to it is absent from Antonio's speech (which could be said to represent a far more 'Petrarchan' view of friendship and solitude), the idea of self-knowledge is directly addressed in Aurelio's, and it is here that we find that greatest change in attitude from Innocent and Petrarch. For Aurelio does not consider self-knowledge to be a positive condition. Instead he argues that:

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[17] This marginal note also appears in the Italian editions of 1563 (fol. 3r) and 1564 (fol. 2v), in which *ladillos* appear throughout, as in Cervantes de Salazar's edition.

> quien bien considerare los daños de la vida, y los males por do el hombre pasa del nascimiento a la muerte, parescerle ha que el mayor bien que tenemos es la igorancia de las cosas humanas, con la cual bivimos los pocos dias que duramos como quien en sueño pasa el tiempo de su dolor, que si tal conoscimiento de nuestras cosas tuviésemos cómo ellas son malas, con mayor voluntad desearíamos la muerte que amamos la vida. (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 121)[18]

According to Aurelio, the human faculty of understanding is not a help but a hindrance:

> aunque es alabado y suele por él ser ensalçado el hombre, *más nos fue dado para veer nuestras miserias que para ayudarnos contra ellas*: éste nos pone delante los trabajos por do avemos pasado; éste nos muestra los males presentes y nos amenaza con los venideros antes de ser llegados. (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 128; my emphasis)

The implication here is that we can do nothing to resolve the pain and misfortune self-knowledge reveals. It would be much better, Aurelio believes, to 'carescer de aquesta lumbre, que tenerla para hallar nuestro dolor con ella; principalmente pues tan poco vale para enseñarnos los remedios de nuestras faltas' (128-29). While Cervantes de Salazar's edition has only the one *ladillo* associated with this passage – 'Entender el hombre su miseria es para mas miseria suya' (1546: fol. 6r) – the Italian translation adds a further two: 'Miserie del l'intelletto', and 'Volendo gli huomini saper piu sano manco' (1564: fol. 7r-v).

[18] Unless otherwise stated all citations from the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* are taken from the 1995 edited by Cerrón Puga. Citations from the Italian translation are taken from the 1564 edition by Ulloa, for which folio numbers will be given.

These editorial interventions strengthen the message that knowledge of man's miserable state is not always to be desired and can in fact by harmful.

For Aurelio 'ignorance is bliss' because making man aware of the misery of his situation leads not to humility and God as *De miseria* contends, or consolation as Reason argues in *De remediis*, but only to more suffering. So pessimistic is the truth about man's nature that becoming made aware of the harsh reality would inspire in readers a desire to end their lives – the ultimate sin –, thereby rejecting hope and salvation, and ultimately God's providence. The misery that Aurelio describes 'no se funda en el pecado, ni en la caída, ni en la parte material y corruptible del hombre' (Vega 2011: 20-21); in fact it disregards the divine entirely. While God is a consistent presence in Antonio's speech, in Aurelio's he is never once mentioned, nor are other associated terms such as 'afterlife', 'salvation', 'providence', or 'sin'. Aurelio speaks of an impious misery that assumes if God exists then he is cruel or at the very least indifferent to the minutiae of human destiny.[19] In Aurelio's conception of the world, then, there is no return to a spiritual or divine 'originary point'. Man is alone and subject to the powerful creative and ruling forces of Nature and Fortune. But for the insistence of his audience that he reveal all, Aurelio would rather 'meteros en tal ceguedad y tal olvido que no viérades la miseria de nuestra humanidad, ni sintiérades la fortuna, su atormentadora' (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 122). In his Italian translation, Ulloa extends the simple image of sight here into one of 'seeing *and understanding*' with the addition of the verb 'comprendere': 'che non havessi *veduta nè compresa* la miseria della nostra humanità' (1564: fol.4v; my emphasis). This editorial intervention suggests that the processes of seeing and

[19] See Vega (2003: 9).

understanding are linked but separate, and intimates that in order to attain a deeper level of self-knowledge, more than passive acknowledgement of one's situation is required. Ending with an image of nothingness, Aurelio claims to have 'traído el hombre hasta el punto donde desvanesce' (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 134) and to have left 'a él y su fama enterrados en olvido perdurable'; he questions whether Antonio will be able to 'resusitarlo' and 'dale vida [...] y consuelo' (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 136-137).

By the mid-sixteenth century, then, the concept of self-knowledge as it related to the misery and dignity of man had evolved: gone is the penitential and ascetic view of man's misery, replaced by an epicurean and material perspective.[20] It is a development that I believe could have shaped the meanings *Celestina* held for sixteenth-century audiences. Although Rojas's work is informed by discourses and conventions that circulated in works that were part of this central debate about the human condition, such as those of Innocent and Petrarch, *Celestina* moves beyond the horizon of its production and these earlier textual traditions. Instead, the horizons of its reception represent ever evolving moments that, in time, become further populated, and complicated, by other works such as Pérez de Oliva's *Diálogo*. As the literary horizon is reconfigured, and as alternative perspectives on human misery and dignity emerge, new meanings and different nuances come to light that would have been less obvious or scarcely conceivable at the point of *Celestina*'s conception.

[20] On this change in attitude toward the human condition in Pérez de Oliva's *Diálogo*, see Vega (2003: 9).

The Path to Truth

In *Celestina* self-knowledge is also advocated as a means to truth and ultimately freedom from the world's deceits. In his verses that frame the narrative Rojas purports to reveal the truth about the vileness of human nature and the dangers and traps laid by love, telling readers that his pen 'Atrae los oídos de penadas gentes, / De grado escarmientan y arrojan su carga' (Rojas 2000: 11).[21] He urges them to be aware of characters' sins in order to learn how *not* to live – 'Notad bien la vida que aquestos hicieron, / Tened por espejo su fin cual hobieron, / A otro que amores dad vuestros cuidados' (Rojas 2000: 14) – and to turn their backs on destructive and ultimately futile passions – 'Vos, los que amáis, tomad este enjemplo, / Esto fino arnés con que os defendáis, / Volved ya las riendas, por que no os perdáis' (Rojas 2000: 13); he thus presents the *Tragicomedia* as a mirror in which his readers will see the truth about themselves. The image is retained by Ordóñez in the Italian translation of the verses, which on more than one occasion make reference to a 'specchio': the lovers are held up as a bad

[21] Here, while the use of 'sciogliere affanni e pianti' in Ordóñez's translation into Italian (Rojas 1973: 36) retains the idea of releasing oneself from worries and distress suggested by *arrojar su carga*, the connotations conveyed by *escarmentar*, to 'learn one's lesson', are lost.

example in which readers, old and young, can discover the truth.[22] The Italian translation of these stanzas lacks the focus upon the misery and worthlessness of the material world and the message of orthodox Christian piety. There is only one direct reference to God – 'Exemplo pigli qui lo innamorato, / Bendicendo lalto Creatore' (Rojas 1973: 37) – and the straightforward exhortation to have faith in God found in the Castilian becomes the more ambiguous 'prestarvi fede'; it is unclear here whether the reference is to the remedy provided by the author (i.e. the book), or to God. Instead, the penultimate stanza tells readers that not only God but the earthly human creators of the work should be praised: 'Laudi quel chel principio a lopra ha data; / A quel che la fini, rendasi honore' (Rojas 1973: 37).

The acrostic verses are directed at lovers and seek to warn readers against *loco amor*; yet as Lawrance (1993) has demonstrated, love in *Celestina* has important moral as well as social implications. These stanzas, and love in the work more generally, acquire a more profound, existential significance when read against the wider ideological context into which *Celestina* was received, namely anxiety about the dangers of vernacular fiction – a topic to which I return in Chapter Four. Censors and critics viewed love as part of wider philosophical and theological debates about the human condition: 'los que amáis' could quite easily become 'los que pecáis'. In her study of Gabriel Du Puyherbault's treatise on censorship, *Theotimus sive de tollendis et expungendis malis libris* (1548), Donatella Gagliardi (2006;

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[22] A commonplace image, the idea of the 'mirror' is found also in Petrarch's *Secretum* where it is linked to Seneca (*Naturales quaestiones*, 1.17.4), who explains that they were invented by nature 'ut homo ipse se nosceret' ('so that humans might know themselves'), and 'deinde etiam consilium aliquod' ('[gain] some insightful advice'; cited in Zak 2010: 137-138, n. 39). There were no vernacular translations of the *Naturales quaestiones*, possibly because it was considered doctrinally dangerous in parts, although second-hand knowledge of them could be gained from Luca Manelli's *Tabulatio et Expositio Senecae*, included in Alonso de Cartagena's Senecan compilation, *Los cinco libros de Séneca* (1491) (Fothergill-Payne 1988: 13).

2010) discusses the association between love and impiety made by Puyherbault. Works dealing with amatory topics were thought to pose a more general moral danger to readers, leading to heresy as well as impropriety and social chaos:

> pocos se han percatado de las amenazas que ocultan semejantes maestros de maldad, y del estrecho vínculo que une, por un lado, honestas costumbres y ortodoxia, por otro, lujuria y herejía: quien no vive castamente acabará generando cismáticos e impíos. (Gagliardi 2006: 71)

Thus readers are advised in the verses that frame *Celestina*'s narrative in both the Castilian and Italian to turn away from worldly vices such as love and control themselves 'por que no os perdáis' – a reference that gains a more serious implication in light of beliefs about the potential for impiety that resided in man's passions. The stanzas provide a focus for the contemplation of the transitory nature of the world: reminding readers more generally of their mortality – 'Estando en el mundo yacéis sepultados' (Rojas 2000: 13) – and that ultimately, the only truth is faith in God – 'Load siempre a Dios visitando su templo' (Rojas 2000: 13) – they display religious orthodoxy and anxiety. Recalling the image of Christ upon the Cross and the sufferings he endured at the hands of 'falsos judíos' the verses conclude the work with the encouragement 'Pues aquí vemos cuán mal fenecieron / aquestos amantes, huigamos su danza. / Amemos a Aquel que espinas y lança, / azotes y clavos su sangre vertieron' (Rojas 2000: 349). Rojas's ostensible position would seem to offer a straightforward ascetic characterisation of man's miserable and sinful state – witness the 'muy gran dolor' provoked by the contemplation of man's condition (Rojas 2000: 13). And yet, while the paratexts may proclaim a Christian message, it differs considerably

from that of Antonio's in the *Diálogo*, which sees man in a wholly positive light. Rojas may reiterate the necessity of having faith in God, but his words are hardly a promotion of man's dignity.

The overall message of the Italian translation of the concluding verses conveys the same orthodox Christian message of piety by focusing on the inevitability of death and the need to avoid the worldly and turn to the divine – 'Mentre sian dunque nel corporeo manto, / Cerchiamo dacquistare il regno sancto' (Rojas 1973: 260). And yet, the verses in translation do not, to my mind, have as strong an impact: Ordóñez drops the evocative reference to Christ's Passion and replaces it with the rather less striking 'Drizzamo nostra mente al diuin choro / E in lui poniamo ogni hor nostra speranza' (Rojas 1973: 260). Furthermore, the translation demonstrates less *personal* anxiety about religious orthodoxy from the point of view of the author than the Castilian original, where this is further underlined in the final of the concluding authorial stanzas by the statement: 'Y así, no me juzgues por eso liviano, / mas antes celoso de limpio vivir, / celoso de amar, temer y servir / al alto Señor y Dios soberano' (Rojas 2000: 350). In the Italian these four lines are summed up in only one: 'Dunque non mi chiamar per cio in humano' (Rojas 1973: 260) – where potential criticism of the author has transmuted from *unchaste* to *inhuman*, thereby escalating the seriousness of the work's influence. Yet the rest of the stanza focuses far more upon readers' responsibility for their interpretation – 'Che se ben stendi inanzi la tua mano / Troverai medicina ate nascosta' – and the commonplace image of separating the wheat from the chaff – 'lassila paglia e prenda el grano' (Rojas 1973: 260), found also in the Castilian *Tragicomedia*. The effect of the translation into Italian is to reduce the strength and dramatic effect

of the call to Christian faith found in the Castilian, and to place more emphasis upon the skills of the author(s) and role of the reader, rather than the need for religious orthodoxy.

Furthermore, the actual depiction of human conduct in the narrative itself is ironic and invites a pessimistic view, establishing an affinity with Aurelio's speech in the *Diálogo*. The pessimism of *Celestina* has long been acknowledged by scholars such as Cándido Ayllón (1965) and Alan Deyermond, the latter noting that it is now generally accepted that the *Tragicomedia* goes beyond and deepens Petrarch's perspective (2003 [1961]: viii) – a view reiterated more recently by Jesús G. Maestro (2003 [2000]: 49), Consolación Baranda (2004: 30-31), and E. Michael Gerli (2011a: 23). Baranda argues that *Celestina* offers no positive alternative to the ideologies and conventions it questions and parodies (2004: 36); however, I contend that, while not positive, an alternative perspective could nevertheless have been suggested by the contemporary textual and ideological context in which it was received. When read alongside Aurelio's speech and in the context of the discourse of disbelief that emerges in the course of the sixteenth century, the notorious ambiguities and open-endedness that characterise *Celestina* acquire added layers of significance that further challenge orthodox Christian beliefs.

Rojas apparently wants his readers to see clearly, to cast off their blindness in order to save themselves from worldly traps: his exhortation to readers – 'Limpiad ya los ojos, los ciegos errados' (Rojas 2000: 14)[23] – appears to challenge Aurelio's desire in the *Diálogo* to return readers to a state of blind ignorance.

[23] The Italian translation of the verses retains the emphasis on seeing clearly in order to avoid being deceived, and which evokes an awakening brought about by 'sight' of oneself: 'Tenete questo a gliocchi per un spechio, / A cio che amando siate men decepti' (Rojas 1973: 37).

However, his emphasis on enlightenment is not positive and suggests instead that the truth in fact brings pain and suffering. Thus, using a common trope of medieval authors, Rojas confesses to concealing it within a deceptively irreverent outer layer – a 'píldora amarga [...] dentro de dulce manjar' (Rojas 2000: 11). Despite proposing that the truth will liberate readers, he deliberately seeks to make its revelation difficult. This desire to protect readers from the harshness of reality is in sharp contrast to the anxiety Rojas demonstrates about interpretive openness in the prologue to the *Tragicomedia* and about the ability of his readers to profit from his 'bitter pill' of truth in the opening verses. It is a rhetorical stance that actively allows for the possibility that the ultimate truth is misunderstood, for it widens the gulf separating man from knowledge that was supposedly beneficial and leaves it open instead to misinterpretation and likely misuse.[24]

Events in *Celestina* show that the truth is not only hard to deal with but hard to come by due to the conflict inherent in mankind between the potential for excellence and propensity for baseness. A study of how self and community function, Rojas's work represents the interactions and conflicts of different social groups, ages, and genders. Aside from its use as a rhetorical ploy in the persuasions of Celestina, friendship is conceived by most characters as a necessary and vital part of human interaction if not survival, and solitude, on the surface at least, is presented as something better to be avoided. And yet, as Deyermond has argued (2003 [1961]: 117-18), *Celestina* goes beyond the Petrarchan point of view (which represents friendship in a generally positive light while admitting its drawbacks) to see social interactions as potentially destructive

[24] This is an issue to which I will return in Chapter Four.

and corrupting, if not toxic.[25] While the abhorrence towards fellow men of which Aurelio speaks in the *Diálogo* is not demonstrated here, it is certainly evident that characters struggle to disentangle themselves from the debts and duties to which relationships hold them; that they are bad influences upon one another, encouraging lust, greed, and a disregard for anything other than worldly gratification; that faced with the constant battle to assert their independence, power, and control in situations, and to resist the desires and schemes of others, the process of seeking out the truth of themselves and the world is arduous.

Set in a busy urban environment, there appears little chance in *Celestina* to escape to the sort of peaceful idyll so promoted by Petrarch and Pérez de Oliva. And yet, it is interesting that important moments of awakening, when characters explore a truth about themselves or a situation, tend to occur when they are alone. For María Rosa Lida de Malkiel the monologues represent 'conflictos anímicos expresados en voz alta' (1962: 124). Not only do they convey a sense of psychological realism and depth, and demonstrate characters' desire to examine their consciences, when set in the wider ideological context I am describing here, they provide a commentary – an *aparte* – on the conventional association between self-knowledge and the philosopher's solitude.

Two characters for whom this is particularly true are Melibea and Pleberio, whose experiences of solitude bring about a disjunction in their conception of

[25] In contrast, Gil-Oslé is of the opinion that that representation of friendship in the work is positive: '*La Celestina* rebosa de conceptos y dichos sobre la amistad provenientes de fuentes clásicas y renacentistas. El concepto renacentista de la amistad como instrumento que mejora la calidad de vida de los individuos de una sociedad es fundamental para la comprensión cabal de la obra' (2005: 195).

self.[26] Melibea's self-conscious explorations take place when she is alone, as in Act X; or she strives to find a space for reflection, actively seeking to avoid others, as in Act XX when she sends her father and Lucrecia away. Pleberio's lament, which demonstrates the process of self-discovery, is only possible because of his experience of profound solitude (with Alisa dead if not dying). Melibea's death not only radically destabilises all that he knows of the world but acts as the catalyst for a subsequent desperate search for answers and a reconsideration of who he is and what his purpose in life has been.[27]

In certain instances solitude is a practical necessity, such as in Act XX where Pleberio and Lucrecia would undoubtedly physically attempt to stop Melibea's suicide, a possibility of which she is quite aware: 'Quiero cerrar la puerta, por que ninguno suba a me estorvar mi muerte' (Rojas 2000: 329); in others it comes unbidden and is forced upon them by circumstances, as it is for Pleberio in the final lament of the narrative. In reading these instances of solitary examinations of conscience alongside Aurelio and Antonio's opening discussion in the *Diálogo*, it becomes clear that a new emphasis emerges upon solitude as a necessary creative space in which to find self-knowledge, whether consciously desired or not. Yet, while it is true that characters engage in moments of self-reflection when alone, the kinds of truth and self-knowledge they reach, and the way in which they deal with it, are another matter. Rojas may

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[26] Dunn uses the term 'self-knowledge' to refer to Melibea's character development (1976: 411). I disagree with Maestro's assertion that Melibea 'es *el único* personaje que, además de Celestina y de Areúsa, piensa por sí mismo' (2003 [2000]: 10; my emphasis): Pleberio definitely, Pármeno and even Calisto show a desire at times to know and understand themselves.

[27] See Gerli's chapter on 'Pleberio and the Ends of Desire' (2011b: 199-221) for an interpretation of the lament that demonstrates how it goes beyond the meaning of the elegiac texts from which it is formed, which are 'interrogated through strikingly new content' (2011b: 203).

not depict the negative impact self-knowledge may have as directly or as openly as Aurelio does, but his narrative nevertheless radically qualifies the idea that it could lead to the humility and salvation Innocent desired, or the consolation Petrarch envisaged – in other words, to the 'self-identity, meaning, and wholeness' Murchland describes (1966: xix). Instead *Celestina* shows how it results in physical and spiritual fragmentation and a state of estrangement that goes beyond the conceptualisation of the human condition seen in earlier medieval works such as *De miseria* or *De remediis*.

Revelation and Concealment

Self-knowledge is actively presented by characters in *Celestina* as a process that happens or is revealed *to* them, often in moments of solitude, and which is inspired by an external impulse, such as a particular circumstance or occurrence. For example, I estimate that variants of the term 'descobrir', which signifies 'to reveal' or 'to uncover' as well as 'bring about understanding of something new', occur thirty-six times in total.[28] A third of these occasions involve Melibea, who employs it four times in Act X (three of which appear in her soliloquy), and twice in Act XX during the speech to her father. These uses of 'descobrir' correspond to moments in which Melibea is attempting to negotiate the truth about her

[28] The Italian either uses 'scoprire' or 'discoprire' in these passages.

nature.[29] The fact that it holds such a central position in the examination of her conscience in Act X's monologue points to the importance of solitude in this process.[30] It furthermore underlines the tension inherent in the process of acquiring self-knowledge, a desire to conceal as well as reveal, and the difficulties involved in accepting the truths that are discovered.[31]

As the description of 'descobrir' denotes, the term evokes both the discovery of something that already exists and the creation of something new – a paradox that suggests doubt about characters' insistence upon self-knowledge as a passive experience. The three times that Melibea uses the term in Act X's soliloquy, for example (Rojas 2000: 219-220), suggest the uncovering of something that has been otherwise hidden or unknown: namely, the distressing reality about restrictions on women and her feelings for Calisto. Yet, as we will see, while characters present these moments of awakening as externally-produced, they themselves are complicit in if not actively part of their very creation. Roland Greene's exploration of 'invention' in his original approach to

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[29] Brooks (2000) believes that 'descubrimiento' represents a literal opening up or penetration of Melibea's body and mind in the context of patriarchal control over the female body. Brocato's reading focuses on the puncturing of Melibea's carefully crafted disguise by Celestina's words in Act XX (1996: see particularly 117-18) – a topic to which I will return in the final section of Chapter Four.

[30] By my estimation 'descobrir' occurs a six further times in monologues by Celestina (Act IV, twice), Pármeno (Act VIII, once), Calisto (Act XIII, once), and Pleberio (Act XXI, twice) at key moments during which they too search for self-knowledge and truth about the world.

[31] Other characters also experience revelations when alone. Celestina's perambulatory musings at the start of Act IV betray a level of honesty and self-awareness she would never otherwise publically display. Calisto, too, experiences an awakening, albeit momentarily. His soliloquy in Act XIV, which comes after he sends Tristán and Sosia away, opens with the comment that '¡O mezquino yo! ¡Quánto me es agradable de mi natural la solicitud y silencio y escuridad!' (Rojas 2000: 277). The need to be alone suits his melancholic state and miserable nature; the 'darkness' of which is speaks is figurative as well as literal: for the moment of lucidity he experiences here, prompted by the circumstances of his servants' deaths, is fleeting. He soon returns to carnality, having convinced himself to embrace the heady ignorance of desire once again.

cultural semantics (2013) offers a conceptual framework by which we can better understand this complex process of awakening in *Celestina*. Like 'descobrir' *invention* 'encompasses many senses from discovery to adaptation to application to conception' (Greene 2013: 18), though Greene here focuses only on two, those of discovery and conception.[32] Approaching Melibea's use of 'descobrir' in the light of his schemata brings to the fore the semantic interrelations between 'finding' and 'creating' that are implicit in the term. It is, as Greene's theory proposes, palimpsestuous in that it carries multiple senses and shifting implications at once. Melibea's use of 'descobrir' is poised on the boundary between discovery and creation. For while she defers to earlier textual models (e.g. the tropes of courtly love), she simultaneously engages with these past authorities to 'create fictions in the present destined to be encountered in the future' (Greene 2013: 20). I contend that she uses 'descobrir' as many authors in the Renaissance did, to 'reflect on their world but also their agency in it, their entanglement with things and works, and their historical situations' (Greene 2013: 20). One of Greene's most relevant and useful ideas is his statement that

> *invention* is not only what it seems to be, a rhetorical process received from classical antiquity, but a figure that represents the confrontation between two factors, the human capacity to touch reality and that reality itself. (2013: 19)

Such a confrontation is evident in Melibea's reaction to her awakening.

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[32] When the sense of 'discovery' is meant: the object is matter, things; the medium is memory, the site of authority the original writer, who influences the present reader; and the temporality is past to present. When 'conception': the object is experience, the world; the medium is the utterance; the site of authority the present writer; and the temporality is present to future (Greene 2013: 20).

Through her experience of solitude Melibea confronts an unwelcome truth: that what she is experiencing is a repressed sexuality, a socially unacceptable desire that necessitates concealment from wider society – though not necessarily from Lucrecia and Celestina, who are clearly aware of her feelings, or obviously Calisto.[33] But it is also more than this: the truth about her sexuality is not simply unacceptable according to social norms but, on a deeper level, painful to admit even to herself – perhaps because even at this point in the liaison she is aware that the person to whom she will ultimately reveal these desires, and eventually surrender her honour, is an imperfect and unworthy lover far removed from her vision of the ideal courtly suitor. Crucially, however, Melibea does not use the 'descubrimiento' she experiences to bring about a positive transformation in her life from a spiritual perspective, to eschew worldly dangers in favour of the divine, as Innocent suggests one should. If anything she does the opposite, rejecting the awakening it brings. This rejection is symbolised by the 'hoja de castidad' that she uses to cover her 'amoroso deseo, publicando ser otro mi dolor que no el que me atormenta' (Rojas 2000: 220). Yet this 'hoja' is not so much a public dissimulation as a private one used to hide the discrepancy between her desires and reality. George A. Shipley remarks that 'It is not unlikely that [Melibea] is more knowing – of herself and her adversary – than she lets on; she has good reason to dissemble (and she has proved she can)' (1975: 327) and he observes that she negotiates the revelation of her

[33] See Celestina's reference to 'las señas de su tormento en las coloradas colores de tu gesto' (Rojas 2000: 220); or Lucrecia's comment 'Señora, mucho antes de agora tengo sentida tu llaga y calado tu deseo; hame fuertemente dolido tu perdición. Cuanto tú más me querías encobrir y celar el fuego que te quemaba, tanto más sus llamas se manifestaban en la color de tu cara, en el poco sosiego del corazón, en el meneo de tus miembros, en comer sin gana, en el no dormir. Así que de contino se te caían como de entre las manos señales muy claras de pena' (Rojas 2000: 229-230).

feelings in a 'conscious calculated manner' (1975: 330). A turning point in the action of the narrative and in the development of the character of Melibea, Act X's climax is unusual because 'the movement is internal and disguised' (Shipley 1975: 332). Shipley's comment hits upon the obfuscation that Melibea practices.

In her later monologue of Act XX, another moment of solitary self-examination, Melibea acknowledges the pain her death will cause her father but vacillates between admitting her culpability – 'Gran sinrazón hago a sus canas; gran ofensa a su vejez; gran fatiga le acarreo con mi falta; en gran soledad le dejo' (Rojas 2000: 229-230)[34] – and simultaneously downplaying it by comparing herself to those who are guilty of far worse crimes against their families – 'Otros muchos crueles hobo que mataron hijos y hermanos, debajo de cuyos yerros el mío no parecerá grande' (Rojas 2000: 330). Even when forced to reveal all to her father in Act XX she refuses to openly admit the truth about her desire or active role in her own dishonour, reconstructing herself instead as an innocent victim of Celestina's plotting, who 'sacó mi secreto amor de mi pecho; descobrí a ella lo que a mi querida madre encobría; tovo manera como ganó mi quere; ordenó cómo su deseo [el de Calisto] y el mío hobiesen efeto' (Rojas 2000: 333).[35] Similarly, 'vencida de su amor', she paints Calisto as an active and virile man who 'Quebrantó con escalas las paredes de tu huerto; quebrantó mi propósito' (Rojas 2000: 333), while maintaining that her role was one of passive surrender: 'perdí mi virginidad' (Rojas 2000: 333) – a stance that glosses over other instances in

[34] Ordóñez changes 'soledad' to 'sollicitudine' and in doing so emphasises anxiety or concern as opposed to loneliness, as in the Castilian (Rojas 1973: 249). It is hard to know whether this was a deliberate modification or, as Kish notes (Rojas 1973: 17), simply an error: the substitution of a word that would accurately translate the Castilian by another similar in sound and spelling.

[35] Chapter Four will address the evident tension in Melibea's portrayal of freedom and constraint with regards to the prostitute's speech.

their affair where she demonstrates an active control of the situation.[36] She continues the profound self-deception in which she has so far lived to such an extent that she is unable to acknowledge its seriousness: while recognising the effects of her death upon her family (and indeed, wrongly blaming herself alone for all the chaos her affair with Calisto has caused) she willingly ignores the fact that she is about to commit the one sin that will bring permanent estrangement, not only from society but from the divine: suicide.[37] Melibea's 'hoja de castidad' serves to conceal reality from herself; it is a figurative extension of the leaves of the books through which she lives out her fantasies.[38] Allowing her to feign ignorance, it returns her to the state of metaphorical blindness or somnambulance described by Aurelio – the 'ignorancia de las cosas humanas, con la cual bivimos los pocos dias que duramos *como quien en sueño pasa el tiempo de su dolor*'.

Isolation and Alienation

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[36] See Act XII for such an example (Rojas 2000: 246-247). In the above quotations here, Ordóñez replaces 'quebrantar' with 'corrompere', meaning 'to corrupt', which foregrounds the symbolic link between prostitutes, language, and corruption to be discussed in Chapter Four.

[37] In this I differ from Maestro, who is of the opinion that 'la interpretación que hace Melibea ante su padre de los hechos acaecidos es una de las más claras y sinceras de cuantas hemos oído a lo largo de la tragicomedia' and that she alone of all characters in the work 'es el único personaje que, finalmente, se comporta con plena sinceridad, consigo mismo y ante su padre, Pleberio, que representa para ella la máxima autoridad del orden moral; en este sentido, Melibea es el único personaje que adquiere una condición plenamente trágica, al asumir por completo, y de forma absolutamente sincera, su responsabilidad en los hechos' (2003 [2000]: 12).

[38] For the concept of 'living through literature', see Severin (1989: particularly chapter 3, pp. 23-24, and chapter 7, pp. 96-100).

Pleberio's engagement with self-knowledge demonstrates a similar approach. Act XXI shows a man whose existence has become as broken as the daughter who lies before him, and whose purpose in life (providing for his family, acquiring wealth, and ensuring the continuation of their good reputation) has ceased to hold meaning. The frequent use of exclamations and questions, which serve as the speech's rhetorical backbone and come in short bursts scattered throughout, demonstrate his grief and pain. They also suggest a fragmented and uncertain self. Take, for example, the statement '¿Qué haré cuando entre en tu cámara y retraimiento y la halle sola? ¿Qué haré de que no me respondas si te llamo? ¿Quién me podrá cobrir la gran falta que tú me haces?' (Rojas 2000: 343), or:

> ¡O duro corazón de padre! ¿Cómo no te quiebras de dolor, que ya quedas sin tu amada heredera? ¿Para quién edifiqué torres? ¿Para quién adquirí honras? ¿Para quién planté árbores? ¿Para quién fabriqué navíos? ¡O tierra dura! ¿Cómo me sostienes? ¿Adónde hallará abrigo mi desconsolada vegez? (Rojas 2000: 338-339)

The conclusion to the lament, and entire work, ends with uncertainty and solitude, and calls attention to the shattered state in which Melibea lies:

> ¡O mi compañera buena! ¡O mi hija despedezada! ¿Por qué no quesiste que estorbase tu muerte? ¿Por qué no hobiste lástima de tu querida y amada madre? ¿Por qué te mostraste tan cruel con tu viejo padre? ¿Por qué me dejaste cuando yo te había de dejar? ¿Por qué me dejaste penado? ¿Por qué me dejaste triste y sólo in *hac lachrimarum valle*? (Rojas 2000: 346-347)

On one level, Pleberio's loneliness is a rhetorical stance that is actively desired and which sets up his position as the ultimate wronged father who suffers

incomparable and unprecedented pain, which he consistently reiterates through statements such as: '¡O lastimado viejo, que cuanto más busco consuelos, menos razón hallo para me consolar!' (Rojas 2000: 342), 'Ninguno perdió lo que yo el día de hoy' (Rojas 2000: 343); or, addressed to the 'vida de congojas llena':

> ningún triste se halle solo en ninguna adversidad, diciendo que es alivio a los míseros como yo tener compañeros en la pena. Pues, desconsolado viejo, ¡qué solo estoy! Yo fui lastimado sin haber igual compañero de semejante dolor, aunque más en mi fatigada memoria revuelvo presentes y pasados. (Rojas 2000: 341)

Russell believes that one of the opening lines to the lament, 'gentes que venís a mi dolor', suggests that 'el monólogo [...] se pronuncia ante un público de condolientes que van llegando para asistir a sus *planctus* o *conquestio*' (Rojas 2001: 608; n.8). Woodcut images from some sixteenth-century editions would appear to reiterate the collective and public nature of Pleberio's grief rather than the solitude the narrative presents (See Appendix 1, figs. 1-4). As per before, Ordóñez's translation here also misses out the final reference to solitude again, repeating the sense of sorrow instead: 'Per che me lassasti *tristo disconsolato* et in hac lacrimarum valle?' (Rojas 1973: 258; my emphasis).

Yet even if he were surrounded by what one would assume is a sympathetic audience, Pleberio actively rejects this potential comfort. Indeed, his call for the 'gentes que venís a mi dolor' in the lament may not refer to actual people, his neighbours, friends, or servants. Rather, what it represents instead may well be a desperate desire for comfort and recognition that he is not alone in his grief in a spiritual sense, not an actual audience. In *De vita solitaria* Petrarch

writes that man actively desires witnesses to his solitude: just as ancients such as Augustine mention hypothetical bystanders (often Epicurus, Cato, or an unnamed person), for Petrarch Christ is the eternal witness to man's actions (Maggi 2009: 186). According to Armando Maggi, solitude does not mean isolation 'but rather intimate dialogue with a friend who pursues the same intellectual and spiritual ideas' (2009: 180, 184): 'Petrarch envisions solitude as a 'holy' communion of two friends in Christ. The other, the friend, is solitude itself' (Maggi 2009: 193).

Yet Pleberio does not, by the end of the lament, find comfort. Indeed, if anything, he actively turns his back on other people, the world, and examples from culture, history, and literature that could provide a measure of consolation.[39] In *De vita solitaria*, solitude occurs on three levels: physical (place), temporal (time), and spiritual (that of the soul, or contemplation). Attainment of it is represented as a project, a process of becoming; yet, paradoxically, it is depicted by Petrarch as an impossible utopia – 'a disposition of the soul [...] a longing' – since man cannot find truth or rest in anywhere but God (Maggi 2009: 184). Pleberio demonstrates the impossibility of attaining the final stage of contemplative solitude that brings about unity with God. For while he is physically and temporally alone – isolated from his family and the rest of society, and having rejected the consolations of history – he does not find spiritual peace. Instead of finding spiritual consolation in the divine he is left in a world with many questions but no answers, a world in which there is no response.

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[39] Sánchez y Sánchez argues that Rojas's portrayal of grief suggests a shift from a collective to an intensely individualised experience, one that emphasizes the living 'I' over the deceased (2010).

Pleberio's experience of solitude is the antithesis of the desired idyllic space removed from the worries of the world that we find in *De remediis* or the *Diálogo*, being engendered and forced upon him by a horrific experience (the death of a child). However, like the idyllic peace of these other works, it is an experience that does permit him a new perspective on the world; most importantly, as with Melibea, this solitude brings him into headlong confrontation with himself and, ultimately, to a reassessment of the conceptions that he holds when faced with an encroaching reality. Having willingly immured himself in worldly pastimes and practices and sought the types of gratification that both *De miseria* and *De remediis* try to counter, Pleberio is a man whose whole life – sense of self, honour, reputation, and position in society – has until this point been firmly rooted in the quantifiable and tangible *things* – boats, trees, towers, houses – of the material world.[40] Yet his rejection of all this in the final act occurs not because he recognises their inherent transience or worthlessness, as Innocent or Petrarch would hope and advise, but because with the loss of his heir and public honour, they cease to hold *social* significance.

The figurative veil of blindness falls from Pleberio's eyes in Act XXI when, according to Gerli, he is newly 'endowed with a profound sense of consciousness and self-awareness' (2011a: 24) and perceives man's miserable, entrapped state. However, though Pleberio may be experiencing an awakening, he too, like Melibea, is far from fully self-aware. For if, as Petrarch and Innocent argue (albeit, as noted, from different perspectives), the hallmark of a wise man is to know his own imperfections and to admit them, Pleberio cannot be thus characterised. His knowledge and learning – evident in the examples from

[40] See Deyermond (1990) on material goods and wealth in the lament.

literature, legend, and history that he, like Melibea, cites – are futile because while he awakens to the vileness of the world, he is unable to fully admit his own faults.[41]

Gerli believes that 'Cut off from everyone, with no response to his pleas, [Pleberio] can only turn to himself in his quest for subjective understanding' (2011a: 32); yet it is a pursuit in which he ultimately fails. Clinging to the identity of 'grieving, wronged father' in much the same way as Melibea cleaves to the idea of herself as a chaste woman, Pleberio refuses to admit responsibility for his daughter's actions. Instead he looks outwards to place the blame on external forces (the World, Love, and Fortune), even skipping over the failings of other individuals whom he could blame, ignoring Calisto's lust and mentioning only briefly Celestina's machinations – perhaps because admitting a human cause for her actions and death would open up the possibility that at least part of the blame ultimately lies with himself. For all the potential for self-knowledge that Melibea's death brings, Pleberio does not *want* to venture inwards to where the truth resides. Given that *Celestina* was apparently composed in reprehension of *loco amor* and untrustworthy servants and go-betweens it is surprising that the conclusion does not return to these specific problems. Instead, when read against wider debates on the human condition and by the alternative perspective on earlier conceptualisations of solitude and self-knowledge that the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* provides, Pleberio's awakening and indeed the entire conclusion to the *Tragicomedia* come to be seen as decidedly more existential and problematic in nature.

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[41] Deyermond (2003 [1961]: 22-24) reflects upon the use of literary examples by Melibea and Pleberio.

In the Middle Ages and Renaissance self-knowledge was viewed as a sort of 'coping strategy' against the inevitable struggles of life: as Petrarch writes in *De remediis*, 'To know oneself in the most secret closet of the mind is the last help to the acceptance of Fortune' (cited in Bennett 1982: 154) – a message advocated by Hernán Núñez's commentary on the *Laberinto de fortuna*.[42] It can also be seen in *Secretum*, where Petrarch's musings on his own *aegritudo* or *accidia* (melancholy) reveal that it develops as a result of his inability to cope with the mistreatment of fortune; a result he ultimately attributes to the failure of reading and writing to act as armour against hardship.[43] Melibea and Pleberio's problem is also, as Petrarch intimates here, one of interpretation.[44] The criticism of reading practices that we find in *Secretum*, and indeed in the Prologue to the *Tragicomedia*, could be applied to this father and daughter. They fit the descriptions of readers who pick and choose, are obsessed with the superficial, and cling to outward appearances, unable to look beyond the surface.[45] According to Carol E. Quillen, reading is represented as an act that

> assures freedom through self-knowledge as it enables moral action. It represents the path first to true understanding of the human condition and ultimately to a life of virtue and redemption. (1998: 198)

Yet while Melibea and Pleberio's speeches appear to be a quest for resolution as well as comfort, read in the light of this sixteenth-century

[42] On which see Weiss and Cortijo Ocaña (2008: 2: 44-49).

[43] See Zak (2010: 131, 132).

[44] A theme running throughout this study and the various works it considers, the issue of interpretation will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter Four.

[45] See Zak (2010: 135).

ideological and textual horizon what they actually demonstrate is their inability to fully interiorize the process of acquiring self-knowledge. They are brought only to a partial state of awareness because of their unwillingness to fully embrace the truth of their condition. In this muddled awakening, the supposedly positive ends this process is meant to bring (humility, salvation, a bettering of the self, or consolation) do not materialise. Instead, as Aurelio forewarns, even this half-complete state of self-knowledge leads to something far more serious: linguistic, existential and, in the case of Melibea, physical fragmentation; and an experience of solitude so profound that it brings about not the *contemptus mundi* that leads to salvation or to consolation, but estrangement from other people, the world and the divine.[46]

The Possibility of Disbelief

John Edwards argues that attitudes of disbelief at this time were not uncommon, stating that 'it does appear that there was indeed genuine religious scepticism in late medieval and early modern Europe' (1988: 21).[47] Furthermore, in a remark about Inquisitorial statements, Edwards observes that

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[46] On the breakdown in language caused by Pleberio's awakening, see Gerli, who describes a 'sudden awakening that is brutally expressed through a breakdown of language, a kind of enjambment in Pleberio's speaking register' (2011b: 207; 2011a: 26-27).

[47] Ginzburg's fascinating study of a sixteenth-century miller in Italy, Domenico Scandella, or Menocchio, a poor but self-educated man who devised his own conception of the world and was ultimately burned as a heretic, tells us much not only about tensions between social classes and access to books but about common lay beliefs and doubts (1982).

> There is a universal dimension to some of the accusations [...]. They included generalized attacks on Christianity or attacks on specific aspects of the church's teaching; blasphemy, which moved easily into humour and obscenity; materialistic views about this life and scepticism about an afterlife; a belief in the validity of other religions and the possibility of achieving salvation by following them; and finally, the use of magic. (1988: 13)

Similarly, Vega contends that in the sixteenth century disbelief was a 'condición de posibilidad' that was, at the very least, discursive (2008: 267-68). She argues that it is possible to reconstruct a 'biblioteca del ateo, disponible textualmente en el siglo XVI, que hubiera constituido, para decirlo con los polemistas cristianos, una posible *escuela de impiedad o seminario de irreligión*' (Vega 2008: 270; emphasis author's own). Whether Rojas could have made use of or been aware of such a 'biblioteca de la impiedad' is irrelevant. By the mid-sixteenth century when *Celestina* had become widely diffused in Spain and Italy texts in both Latin and the vernacular that dealt with 'impious' topics would have been known about and more than likely accessible. While some would not have been very popular or have had a wide diffusion, others did: despite their inclusion in the Indexes of 1559 and 1564, existing editions of works by Agrippa, Rabelais, and Machiavelli, for example, would not have simply disappeared from circulation.[48] Universal or complete control over book production was an ideological fantasy. This 'atheist's library' also included well-known works in which impious beliefs appeared dialectically, 'como una posición bien representada y argumentada' in a debate or dialogue – such as the Ciceronian dialogue *De natura deorum*; or indeed, Pérez de

[48] See Vega (2008: 276).

Oliva's *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*, as well as other works that formed part of the debate about *de miseria hominis*.[49]

If texts provide a *formal* space in which the possibility of disbelief can be raised, there also exist *ideological* spaces in which orthodox ideas can be questioned. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance, one such ideological space was

> la consideración de la naturaleza humana, ya sea desde la antropología epicúrea, ya desde la experiencia de la vida social y de la ordenación del mundo. El hombre mismo, o el concepto de hombre, puede ser causa de ateísmo, o, más exactamente, puede ser la causa de una de las formas de ateísmo pleno en el Quinientos: de la negación de la providencia y de la inmortalidad del alma. (Vega 2008: 296)

Although *Celestina* is perhaps not in itself a 'disbelieving' work, it can nevertheless become one, I would argue, when read in a context in which the possibility of disbelief was emerging.[50] I propose that the pessimism and nihilism expressed by Melibea and Pleberio would have acquired even greater significance and could have been seen as an even more sharply subversive example of despair and the denial of God's providence when read in a horizon populated by texts that espoused such a message – texts, for example, like the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*.[51] Indeed, Pérez Fernández comments that

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[49] See Vega (2008: 278, 301).

[50] Where 'disbelief' has been mentioned in relation to *Celestina* by critics, it is normally with regards to the supposed 'converso' spirit of its author and characters; on which see Berndt (1963), Castro (1965), Salvador Miguel (1989; 2001), and Maestro who, in contrast to Castro (1965: 87), finds little obvious manifestation of Jewish religious beliefs, despite the lack of 'true' Christian faith in the narrative (2003 [2000]: 53; particularly nn. 39 and 40).

[51] Vega has commented that 'si hay un discurso en las letras europeas que prescinda más netamente de la divinidad, ese es el de las obras renacentistas sobre la miseria humana, las únicas que se vertebran sobre la negación de la providencia y la desconfianza en los privilegios de la razón' (2011: 20-21).

> This underlying existential pessimism may have been far more disturbing for some readers of *La Celestina* than the indecency of its sexual innuendos, or its scandalous heresies, were for others. (2013: 23)

That man is a being 'born to die', as Innocent's treatise *De contemptu* claims, is a sentiment markedly present in the consciousness of most if not all characters in *Celestina*, who show acute awareness of the passage of time and the inescapability of death, the great leveller.[52] Knowledge of this does not, however, appear to bring comfort; it does not drive them away from the worldly and towards God. Berndt argues that these are individuals who consider material, sensual life 'el supremo bien'; all flee from death, demonstrate anxiety about not having lived 'sufficiently', and have no explicit concept of a life beyond awaiting them (Berndt 1963: 96, 98-99).[53] God appears very rarely in *Celestina* as a being with power and control who directly rules over characters' lives. Jerry R. Rank argues that of the 223 times that the term 'Dios' appears over half represent conventional, formulaic usage employed to achieve certain effects within the dialogue yet which reveal little about characters' (or Rojas's) deeper religious convictions (1980: 77, 79). I do not wish to suggest that Rojas was creating atheists *avant la lettre*; rather that the conduct and emotions of Melibea

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[52] See Pleberio and Alisa in Act XVI, for example – 'corren los días como agua de río. No hay cosa tan ligera a huir como la vida' (Rojas 2000: 293); Elicia in Act VII – 'No habemos de vivir para siempre' (Rojas 2000: 184-185); and Calisto in Act XIV – 'que a todos es un igual curso, a todos un mesmo espacio, para muerte e vida un limitado término a los secretos movimientos del alto firmamento celestial de los planetas y Norte, de los crecimientos y mengua de la menstrua luna' (Rojas 2000: 282).

[53] Berndt draws attention to the epicurean spirit of the work evident particularly in the banquet in Act IX, where Celestina talks with sheer delight about youth and pleasure (1963: 97-98). See also Alcalá (1976) and McPheeters (1982).

and Pleberio could be read in this way in light of the later 'biblioteca del ateos'. Neither deny the existence of God; but their actions and beliefs lead them to imply that man is alone in the world in spiritual or religious terms: Melibea becomes aware that the emancipation and perfection for which she strives (that of the perfect, courtly lover) is physically impossible in the world of man.[54] Ironically, the only way she feels able to acquire subjectivity and agency is by giving herself away, by denying her state as a human being; in turn Pleberio's interpretation of his daughter's actions lead him to actively question divine providence.

Critical opinion has interpreted Melibea in various ways: as sincere in her faith, a woman who has an 'especial religiosidad, tan alejada de la devoción frívola de Calisto como del confiado ritualismo de Celestina y Centurio y del ascetisimo desengañado de Pleberio' (Lida de Malkiel 1962: 408-10), even if her awakening to these sentiments occurs only, thanks to Rojas's sense for the dramatic, at the first moment of deep anguish; or as a woman who questions but does not deny the established order and who, far from being nihilistic, kills herself because she refuses to live without the hope of living as she would desire to (Maestro 2003 [2000]).[55] However, I would argue instead that Melibea's actions are indeed a straightforward negation of God's providence: her suicide shows a lack of humility, an inability to accept the path to which her actions have led her –

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[54] According to the *IEP*, *nihilism* is 'the belief that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated. It is often associated with extreme pessimism and a radical scepticism that condemns existence'.

[55] Maestro maintains that Melibea cannot be labelled a 'personaje nihilista', arguing that even though her suicide is an affront to Christian morals, 'su acción no está motivada por un deseo de negar el orden moral trascendente contra el que, inevitablemente, se rebela en el acto mismo de decidir y ejecutar su propia muerte'; he states that 'no lo [el orden moral vigente] niega, lo discute', and that 'No hay esperanza para *ser* como de veras *quiere ser*, y no está dispuesta a seguir fingiendo' (2003 [2000]: 12, 13; emphasis author's own).

despite her protestations otherwise. In her soliloquy in Act X, for example, Melibea appeals directly to God as the ultimate source of power; and yet, proclaiming a lack of pride that is contradicted by her actions, rather than begging his forgiveness for her transgressive desire and dishonesty, what she actually requests is his assistance in maintaining the deception that she is chaste: 'húmilmente suplico des a mi herido coraçón sofrimiento y paciencia, con que mi terrible passón pueda dissimular' (Rojas 2000: 220). There resides a paradox at the heart of her suicide: ironically, it is only in the ultimate act of solitude and nihilism that her self-knowledge leads her to true companionship with Calisto, as I will discuss further in the next chapter.

Returning to Aristotle's notion of man as 'zoon politikon', Lida de Malkiel maintains that in correspondence with her acute awareness of the norms of society Melibea's religion is *social* rather than mystical or moral (1962: 408-09). Her actions are the result of the intersection of various discourses, including Humanistic learning and Aristotelian ideas about self and society. Melibea's cries for aid come not from deep-seated religious sentiment but rather are socially-motivated – exclamations expected of a pious young woman at this time, an argument that Rank's analysis of the emptiness of characters' religious references also supports. In Act XX, she calls upon God as a witness to her powerlessness – 'ves mi poco poder, ves cuán cativa tengo mi libertad...' (Rojas 2000: 331) – assuming, as Russell points out, that he accepts her illicit love and the mortal sin she is about to commit (Rojas 2001: 597, n.25). Interestingly, the favourable attitude which Melibea blindly believes God holds towards her actions is reinforced in the Italian translation: God does not simply *see* her powerlessness ('ver') but *recognises* and *understands* it ('comprendi et cognosci').

Notable, too, is Melibea's explanation why she is less guilty than Herod, Constantine, Ptolemy and the other historical and mythological figures to whom she compares herself: 'con mi pena, con mi muerte, purgo la culpa que de su dolor se me puede poner' (Rojas 2000: 330). With its reference to expiation, Melibea frames her suicide not as a sinful and ultimately damning deed, but as a religious act of atonement – a move that gives rise to a potentially blasphemous comparison with Christ.[56] While she finally offers her soul to God and seeks protection for her parents – an audacious plea that jars with the sin she is about to commit, according to June Hall Martin (1972: 132) – Melibea shows a distinct lack of concern for her own spiritual salvation or damnation. She does not repent, asks no forgiveness for this gross sin that, ultimately, rejects God's providence and power, and thinks only of Calisto, willingly consigning herself instead to another literary trope, that of the *infierno de amadores* where she will be re-united with him.[57] Martin argues that in doing so Melibea 'escapes that worst of all sins – despair' (1972: 132), but this 'pagan erotic heaven' to which she is lured is not a place of peace and rest; rather it is a path that leads to her ultimate destruction (Deyermond 2003 [1961]: 117, n.246). Russell states that it is

> probable que [el suicidio] representase para él [Rojas] un *topos* muy divulgado cuya moralidad no tenía que escudriñar; una larga tradición literaria desde la Antigüedad hasta la época de *La Celestina* presentaba el suicidio de un amante o una amada como un acto admisible; aparece con frecuencia como tal en las

[56] Fothergill-Payne (1988: 87-91) observes that the Senecan sentiments are misunderstood by Melibea, who misreads her own suicide as a heroic act when it is actually far removed from the Senecan ideal. See also Lacarra (2007), for another perspective on Melibea's death.

[57] See Maestro (2003 [2000]: 54).

> llamadas 'novelas sentimentales' españolas de la época de Rojas. (Rojas 2001: 602-03, n. 53)[58]

And yet, as the reception of *Celestina* reveals, it clearly was an issue that subsequent audiences felt needed to be addressed, an attitude manifest in sixteenth-century editions, translations, and adaptations. This is something to which I will return below.

Melibea's behaviour is, as Severin has noted (1989: 23-24, 96-100), inspired by books; her actions in turn inspire Pleberio's pessimistic questioning. However, while his words are a response to Melibea's death, there is also an ideological continuity with her conduct and emotions. For while he bewails the transitory nature of life, the mutability of fortune, and the vanity of terrestrial pursuits such as honour and wealth in keeping with common motifs of the *contemptus mundi* tradition, Pleberio's lament reveals a sense of isolation verging on alienation from the world, history, and other people that goes beyond that experienced by Innocent, standing alone before God in his contempt of the world, or extolled by Petrarch as a positive space of consolation. However, more than simply an estrangement from the worldly, his sense of alienation also has a philosophical if not spiritual basis.[59] In *Celestina* the assumption that self-knowledge leads to unity with any divine 'originary point' is questioned. Masked in the medieval didactic and consolatory traditions from which the lament is born

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[58] The literary and mythological antecedents of Melibea's suicide have been considered by Lida de Malkiel (1962: 446-449).

[59] For Rodríguez Puértolas (1976: 158-163) and Howard (1974: 48-49) this alienation is worldly or material; they relate characters' estrangement to socio-economic factors, and human actions and institutions respectively. Vega is critical of interpretations of later medieval and renaissance perspectives on man's misery such as Howard's, believing that it not only wrongly ascribes collective coherence to what is a state of mind, but overlooks the potential for alternative views of human misery, such as the epicurean, which posit an estrangement from or rejection of the divine (2009: 121-122).

is instead a 'radical nihilism' (Gerli 2011a: 24). In the whole of the narrative Pleberio uses the word *Dios* four times, two of which are conventional uses according to Rank, who argues that such an infrequent amount in comparison to other characters cannot be explained by the disparity of lines alone (1980: 78). Instead he suggests that the small number of examples could 'indicate the de-emphasized interest in the Deity while implicitly emphasizing the deeply pessimistic view of the world that Pleberio expresses', since the two non-conventional uses are negatively associated with death and the treason of love (Rank 1980: 78). As in Aurelio's speech there is no mention of God as a point of comfort; no sense of anxiety, either, over the gross sin his daughter has committed; nor mention of salvation, the afterlife, or the role of the divine (Deyermond 1990: 173-174). There is a distinct lack of any faith in God of the type strongly advocated by Petrarch in 'De ambiguo stato', where Sorrow's feelings of doubt are swept aside with the comment that:

> At non ambiguus Deo. Id sat est. Illi te ipsum fidens crede, et dic ei: 'In manibus tuis sortes mee'; id cum pie feceris, pone metum, pone ambiguitatem, pone sollicitudinem. Ille scit quid de te acturus sit, nullius rei dubius. Parva quidem, sed firma in navicula magnum sulcas mare: fidus tueque salutis amantissimus gubernator est. Quid refert an viam vector ignoret, si magistro navigii nota est? (Petrarca 2002: I, 2, 860)[60]

[60] 'But God has no doubts. Let that satisfy you. Believe, trusting in Him, and say: *My lots are in thy hands*. Do say it with pious devotion, and lay aside fear, doubts, anxiety. He knows what to do with you, He is not doubtful about anything. And with a tiny but steady boat you plow through the huge ocean! He is your faithful, your most loving pilot, steering you to salvation. What does it matter that the traveller does not know the course, as long as it is known to the master of the ship?' (Petrarca 1991: vol. 4, 173).

Pleberio sees death not as a transition to another life with religious significance as it was for Petrarch but as a final disaster.[61] Without hope of a release to some state of being 'beyond', he remains trapped in the metaphorical labyrinth of which Murchland speaks – an existential 'nothingness'. As with Melibea, the realisation of the gulf separating the truth from his 'inner reality' leads only to pain, melancholy, and despair.[62] The realisation of the disjunction between how they perceive themselves to be and reality, or as Rodríguez Puértolas puts it, 'la falta de adecuación entre *esencia* y *existencia*, entre el *querer ser* y el *tener que ser*' is what, in his words, 'produce la deshumanización y la alienación' (1976: 166-167; emphasis author's own).

Gerli observes that 'At the end of *Celestina*, Rojas confirms that it is just as impossible to live life like a Christian as it is to live it like a courtly lover' and that the work 'is not followed by recantation, palinode, or enlightened understanding. We are left with a vision of a world that is never reconciled to conform to Christian beliefs' (2011a: 28). But I would contend that further consideration of these points is required. By the end of the lament Pleberio is left on the verge of utter despair and disbelief and does not receive comfort or answers *within the confines of the narrative*. Yet his reference to the valley of tears, with its allusion to the consoling *Salve regina*, does leave open possibilities for comfort, for readers at least if not for Pleberio himself.[63]

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[61] This is noted by Deyermond (1990: 173-174; 2003: 114) and Gerli (1976: 72; 2011a: 26; 2011b: 212).

[62] See Aers (1992: 187) and Gerli (2011a: 26).

[63] In contrast, Gerli argues that the allusion needs to be taken, like all other scriptural references in the work, in the spirit of irony, denial or contradiction (2011b: 210). The *Salve regina* can be found as a final verse in several other contemporary or near contemporary works – *Coplas de Mingo Revulgo*, and Gómez Manrique's poem, *Defunzión del noble caballero Garcilaso de la Vega* (Lida de Malkiel 1962: 475, n. 4).

The juxtaposition of Rojas's concluding verses immediately after Pleberio's lament leads readers to a stage beyond ambivalence and pessimism that may have suggested an opportunity for salvation. This juxtaposition is reinforced by the layout of some editions, which draw the eye seamlessly from the narrative's final message of despair, to the concluding verses and their insistence upon Christian orthodoxy and faith.[64] The material form of some sixteenth-century editions invites readers to interact with the work in such a way that mirrors the macro-dialogue taking place on a broader European scale through books. Pleberio's conclusion is a reminder that meaning is not inherent but brought out in the encounter between reader and text; it depends on the former's ability to engage comparatively with the latter, and to recognise and understand a quotation (such as 'in hac lachrimarum valle') both in its original and new contexts. It is possible that by framing the narrative in this way Rojas or later editors and printers were attempting to mitigate the effects of any similar pessimism that Melibea and Pleberio's joint example might inspire in readers, thereby pre-empting the sort of responses the work would provoke.[65] However, as we will see, the reception of *Celestina* demonstrates that this moralising was not sufficient to prevent attempts to control its message in the sort of 'soft' censorship mentioned earlier.

Later editors, continuers, translators, and printers of *Celestina* would seek to limit the potential influence of its denial of divine providence and treatment

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[64] This occurs in the following editions that I have examined: Zaragoza: Geoge Coci, 1545 [BNM R/39668]; Alcalá: Juan de Villanueva, 1569 [BNM R/31686]; Seville: Alonso de la Barrera, 1582 [BNM R/24843]; Alcalá: Juan Gracian, 1586 [BNM R/7045]; Alcalá, Hernán Ramírez: 1591 [BNM R/10197].

[65] It was believed that reading poisonous material could bring about immoral behaviour. Melibea is an example of the potential for disruption caused by literature – an issue I will consider in greater depth in Capther Four.

of the ultimate sin, suicide. The most visually striking example of this occurs in the 1575 edition printed by Juan Navarro in Valencia. Textually, the beginning of *Celestina* expresses concern over the harm of relationships between masters and servants, and the effects of *cupiditas*; however, as noted above, the conclusion emphasises the sins of existential and spiritual despair and suicide; it centres on the individual's relationship with the world and, by implication, a divine being that is decidedly absent. Visually, the same message is projected by the sparse but effective use of images.[66] Navarro's edition comprises only two woodcuts, one on the title page (an image frequently found in editions of *Celestina* throughout the sixteenth century in which a number of the work's characters are represented), and a second and final one on the last page of the narrative directly below the lament. There are several interesting aspects to the relationship between text and image in this edition. Firstly, it is worth noting that rather than the oft-used depiction of public grief in Act XXI – a group of figures around a fallen female body – what we have here, at the very end of the work and lament, is a visual reminder of Melibea's greatest sin, her suicide, and a far more personal, private rendering of grief, despair, and solitude (see Appendix 1, fig. 5). Secondly, its positioning immediately below the words 'Laus Deo' (*Praise God*), which conclude Pleberio's speech creates a juxtaposition that, along with the concluding verses with their call to Christian orthodoxy, which begin on the folio immediately facing this, confronts the reader with an immediate negation of the lament's pessimism. Though by no means uncommon in sixteenth-century texts, it is the only occasion I have so far come across this statement in an edition of

[66] On the use of woodcut images in *Celestina*, see Griffin (2001).

Celestina.[67] As a possible response to *Celestina*'s treatment of the human condition, the material form of the book here seeks to mitigate the ultimate sin of suicide and the despair and revocation of God's providence by visually appropriating the work's conclusion into the realms of the socially and religiously acceptable.

Another example can be found in the translation by Jacques de Lavardin (1578), which attempted to contain *Celestina*'s pessimistic message and guide readers' interpretation through the addition of a character, Ariston, Pleberio's brother-in-law, whose role was to provide consolation. The grieving father responds to this intervention with the exclamation that 'Tu m'as rendu la vie, tu as chassé les espesses tenebres dont la precedente douleur tenoit mon esprit offusqué' (Rojas 1974: 256). However, though Ariston provides consolation through a philosophical resignation to fate, his arguments are not based upon the comfort of religion or salvation in the afterlife, despite the fact that he accuses Pleberio of offending God.[68] What he provides Pleberio with at this juncture is not spiritual comfort but a real awakening to truth, to the truth of his own responsibility and faults, and Melibea's. Pleberio may find a version of peace at the end of Lavardin's translation, but it is not because he is re-united with God – who, in fact, is only mentioned briefly this once; rather it is because he is able to fully accept the pain and torments that characterise life, and accept the self-knowledge his awakening brings.

A similar process of containment occurs with the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* when edited by Cervantes de Salazar, who seeks to censor its message and

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[67] The words 'Laus Deos' also appear at the end of the 1546 edition of the *Diálogo* (1546: fol. lxxxv).

[68] See Drysdall's introduction to the edition (Rojas 1974: 19).

smooth out its ambiguities. In Pérez de Oliva's original composition Dinarco, whose role is that of 'judge', does not suggest the 'correct' way to interpret the discussions between Aurelio and Antonio. Cervantes de Salazar addresses this ambiguity by 'completing' the *Diálogo*, modifying its balanced portrayal with an additional dialogue that recapitulates and reformulates the arguments in order to provide more explicit comfort.[69] His additions alter its message by erasing the vagueness of Dinarco's judgement and have Aurelio concede defeat and be persuaded by the additional arguments for man's dignity that the former provides.[70] In the title of Cervantes de Salazar's edition and the Italian translation by Ulloa emphasis is placed on the *dignity* of man as on the moral benefits brought by reading the work:

> Esta presente obra y *Dialogo* de la dignidad del hombre el qual començo en alto stilo y muy profundamente el maestro Oliva y lo prossiguio con grande eloquencia summa erudicion y mucha doctrina Francisco Cervantes de Salazar todo *para reconoscer los dones y beneficios que de dios recebimos para emendar nuestras faltas y poquedades para doctrina enseñamiento de nuestras vidas*' (1546: fol. lxxx[r]; my emphasis).[71]

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[69] The term 'acabado' is used in the title page, which suggests that Pérez de Oliva's version was left unfinished. Yet 'completing' the work is not as straightforward as Cervantes de Salazar would have readers believe: rather than merely adding a hitherto absent ending, Oliva's original conclusion has to be excised ('hasta aquí llegó el maestro Oliva, lo que adelante hasta el fin se sigue compuso Cervantes de Salazar" to make way for what is presented as entirely new but is in fact a re-working (Baranda 2003a: 22).

[70] Baranda discusses the effects of Cervantes de Salazar's changes on the meaning of the original work, representation of its characters, and structure. His editorial interventions have two aims: 'hacer un elogio de la dignidad humana, pero también modificar el diálogo de Pérez de Oliva desactivando los elementos que contribuían a su ambigüedad' (Baranda 2003a: 25).

[71] The Italian title reads: 'Dialogo della degnità dell'huomo: nel quale si ragiona delle grandezze & maraviglie, che nell'huomo sono: & per il contrario delle sue miserie e travagli. Composto *perche l'huomo riconosca i doni & beneficij, che da Iddio riceve: perche si rimova da' suoi peccati & vitij: & per dotrinar & ammaestrar la sua vita*' (my emphasis).

The *Diálogo* is presented as a catalyst that enables man to recognise the truth about his nature and consequently amend his behaviour, as we saw in Innocent's *De miseria*; yet in his engagement with Pérez de Oliva's original work Cervantes de Salazar simultaneously chooses to underline only one possible aspect of the human condition, thus re-framing it as a text of moral and didactic benefit, and glossing over its ambiguities.

Cervantes de Salazar's amended ending, in which Aurelio renounces his earlier stance, is redolent of the response that Pleberio gives in Lavardin's translation, which suggests a mind emerging from the darkness of ignorance. Persuaded by the additional arguments presented to him by Dinarco, Aurelio confesses

> Quedo tan alegre, Dinarco, con el fin de tu sabroso razonamiento [...], quedo alegre en haber nacido: mudando el parecer que al principio tenía, por liquidar bien esta materia. (Cervantes de Salazar 1991: 136-137)

As in the continuations of *Celestina*, Aurelio has been brought into the socially- and religiously-acceptable light of faith in God, his providence, and his salvation:

> Esto me deberá el hombre que conocidas sus faltas, procurará enmendarlas y no estribando en ellas, como en flacos pilares, desconfiando de sí, en sólo Dios pondrá su confianza. (Cervantes de Salazar 1991: 136-37)

A far cry from the Aurelio of Pérez de Oliva's original composition, whom Vega describes as

> quizá el personaje literario del Renacimiento europeo que constituye el más cabal portavoz de este discurso, el que enuncia sin vacilaciones ni concesiones la relación entre la fragilidad del hombre y la inexistencia o improvidencia de Dios. (2011: 20)

It is little wonder then that later editors of the *Diálogo* were of the opinion that Aurelio's words, like Pleberio's, and their significance – the potential for disbelief – needed to be mitigated. As Vega notes, the view of man's misery that Aurelio's speech promotes is a far more dangerous to Christian doctrine:

> Es su idea fundante que la afirmación de la infelicidad radical del hombre – frágil y desdichado, bestia entre las bestias, solo y huérfano de Dios en un mundo hostil y mal hecho – puede entrañar una forma de contestación de la doctrina cristiana, tanto en términos morales como teológicos. De otro modo: la idea extrema de la desdicha y soledad del hombre podría comportar la negación de la providencia divina, cuando no de Dios mismo, o, al menos, la negación de la perfección de las obras de Dios, de la bondad de la creación, y, ante todo, del privilegio del hombre (como *imago Dei*, como *princeps sublunaris*, como soberano de todas las criaturas) en el conjunto del universo creado. (Vega 2009: 116)

As we saw with Melibea and Pleberio, these dangers are borne out by their conduct, emotions, and in Pleberio's case, words: they defy divine providence, show that the concept of humanist subject as a perfectable being is a fallacy, and deny man's privileged and powerful place in the world.

Implicit in the modifications that *Celestina* and the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* were subject to by later editors is the danger posed by reading and misinterpretation – an issue to which I will return in Chapter Four. These works engage with a fundamentally important philosophical issue through the vernacular. In doing so they reach a wider audience of readers perhaps

unprepared for such an unstructured and open treatment of the subject, and who were ultimately, therefore, at risk of being led astray. Baranda argues that the problem for Cervantes de Salazar was not the content of Aurelio's beliefs (which were not in themselves original), but the fact that Pérez de Oliva left the debate open to interpretation (2003a: 22). For the *Diálogo*'s editors it was simply unacceptable that the 'truth' about the human condition was a topic for debate; man's dignity 'no es materia opinable, sino verdad cierta' (Baranda 2003a: 25). *Celestina*, too, was said to be dangerous for 'ignorant' readers who were thought incapable of correctly interpreting the work, or who were rather simply not trained to read past the licentiousness and get to the moral heart of the work – hence the anxiety in the paratextual material. Criticism, both Renaissance and modern, has typically focused on its supposed effects upon un-educated readers.[72] But could *Celestina* also have had the potential to be equally dangerous to those who *were* well read and well-educated? Could readers who were familiar with works like those by Agrippa, Machiavelli, and Pérez de Oliva's *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*, have been influenced by or questioned the despairing ending and potential for disbelief in Pleberio's words and Melibea's actions, above and beyond the malicious intents of servants, go-betweens, and Love?

Philosophy 'In Action'

Vega notes that disbelief can be approached obliquely 'en cauces siempre dialécticos o acogidos al subterfugio de ficción' (2008: 284). Indeed, *Celestina*

[72] See Gagliardi (2007: 62-70).

approaches often theoretical subjects from a position outside of the main debate. This anamorphic view, a method found in the work of contemporary painters such as Hans Holbein the Younger in *The Ambassadors* (1553), is also embedded in the very form of *Celestina*. As Jauss proposes, form implies a social perspective. A novel-in-dialogue that portrays the material realities of life in an urban environment from many different points of view, *Celestina* encourages its readers to look differently at texts, conventions, and ideologies – a concept my definition of the work as a kind of 'aparte' proposes. *Celestina* does not directly stem from the traditional forms of philosophical or theological discourses; yet I believe this is, in part, what makes it such a vibrant and interesting medium for commentary. Instead it demonstrates philosophy 'in action': it engages with discourses and debates that reduce the complexity of life to schemes and ideals and asks what happens when these philosophical and theological ideas are applied to situations with competing material needs and desires.

I have argued that *Celestina* should be seen as forming part of a network of texts that can be classified as responding to debates about the misery and dignity of man encapsulated by Pope Innocent III's treatise, which was a central interlocutor in these discussions – texts that sought to explore what it meant to be human and over time created an evolving series of meanings. Like *De miseria* and *De remediis, Celestina* engages with the idea of bringing about self-knowledge in readers and purports to reveal truths about man's nature and existence in the world. Yet the unfolding of this process is not quite as straightforward – something that reading the work through the *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre* makes clear. In the crowded urban world of *Celestina*, contemplation of the

human condition simply does not lead 'ad componendum...animum'.[73] As E. R. Berndt states: '*La Celestina* es una obra en la que se plantean, no se resuelven, los eternos problemas del hombre' (1963: 92). The fact that Melibea and Pleberio ultimately fail to reach a position of complete self-knowledge encourages readers to engage with this existential struggle for 'self-identity, meaning and wholeness' themselves (Murchland 1966: xix), drawing them into the debate and asking that they in turn respond to the questions and issues *Celestina* raises. In a comment on the open nature of the work, Linde M. Brocato states:

> We are left in the readerly position of Pleberio, drawn into the text and facing vital but problematic, fragmented and deeply textual voices from and about which we try to make moral and intellectual sense, as we perform celestinesque operations on it with our own pens and *punturas*. (1996: 126)

In spite of Rojas's attempt to intervene, via the paratexts, between narrative and audience, *Celestina*'s open-ended nature not only responds to but continues medieval discourses about mankind, inviting further questions of its own. This ongoing debate is illustrated in the sixteenth-century reception of *Celestina* through translations such as Lavardin's and the layout and use of imagery in certain editions, which in turn sought to contain or modify the work's message.

As demonstrated by his statements in the prologues, where he explains the work's development from found fragment to *Comedia* and then *Tragicomedia*, Rojas was fully aware of the latent conflict that characterizes the process by which literature is appropriated. The interpretative openness that he describes there continues to broaden throughout *Celestina*'s own reception, and in potentially

[73] Cited in Rico (1974: 19).

troubling ways, allowing other possible meanings to emerge in light of literary and philosophical developments that appeared subsequent to the work's composition and its earlier medieval antecedents. *Celestina* demonstrates the difficulty of putting into practice the internalised search for truth and willingly accepting the conclusions reached. Read through the *Diálogo*, Melibea and Pleberio can be viewed from an alternative perspective in light of emerging attitudes of uncertainty – 'the better I know myself the less do I understand myself'; or rather, the more a person comes face to face with the truth of who they are, the less they are wont to accept this truth.[74] *Celestina* undermines the humanist idea that man is centred and in control, an idea that appears in contemporary works such as Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (1486).[75] Instead it shows that to be human is to be de-centred and fragmented, and that complete self-knowledge is a humanist fantasy.[76] The concern manifested in the prefatory materials over the effects of truth – slippery, difficult to acquire, and hard to accept – is borne out by *Celestina*'s conclusion, which demonstrates that even partial self-knowledge does not automatically lead

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[74] Bennett (1982: 162-63) ascribes this supposedly new twist to Montaigne.

[75] See Maestro, who argues that *Celestina* 'ataca a la sociedad de humanistas que idealizan las valoraciones literarias y la interpretación, igualmente idealizada, del mundo antiguo. La obra de Rojas contraría abiertamente la labor dogmática y normativa que preceptistas y humanistas italianos se disponen a llevar a cabo a lo largo del siglo XVI.' (2003 [2000]: 24).

[76] Pérez Fernández remarks that '*La Celestina* shows that language and its rhetorical operations, far from informing a virtuous self and providing cohesion to social life, could be put to spurious ends. Rojas significantly departs from the humanist ideal of a civic self articulated upon the rhetorical principles of classical stoicism and Christian doctrine' (2013: 28); and later that 'The humanist programme that proclaimed the primacy of individual will, and subjectivity as a form of knowledge, and sought their ideal co-efficiency within the superior framework of divine providence, does not hold at all within the moral universe of *La Celestina*' (2013: 29).

to positive outcomes. Such anxiety becomes further heightened when read alongside Aurelio's reasoning in the *Diálogo* that

> Bien sabemos que en altas imaginaciones metidos munchos han perdido el seso, y que desta manera no podemos meter nuestra alma en hondos pensamientos sin peligro de su perdición. (Pérez de Oliva 1995: 128)

Rojas may call for meditation upon Christ's passion and claim to reveal the sins of fellow men in order to guide his readers to salvation, but the narrative provokes a more paradoxical response by showing that the deeds of these individuals take place in a world of wretchedness in which divine providence seemingly has no sway. *Celestina* goes beyond the earlier discourse about the misery and dignity of man, which sought to increase awe before God's power and benevolence, reinforce the worthlessness of the worldly and the importance of the divine, or provide consolation. Rather than staging humility and redemption, salvation and consolation, it sets before us doubt and disbelief, fragmentation and alienation; it does not qualify but questions man's relationship with the divine. Rojas may have attempted to contain these troubling implications, but in the horizon of sixteenth-century debates about the human condition his book continued to provide an oblique perspective on man's misery. In this particular context, then, *Celestina* becomes another voice that challenges confident belief in God, and dangerously posits a rupture between the human and divine.

3. Courtliness and Community: Fashioning Self and Society with Words

Language, 'Civilitas', and Selfhood

One of the main tenets in Renaissance 'philosophies of man', to borrow Cassirer's (1948) well-known phrase, was that language was a defining factor of human identity and dignity, marking mankind as distinct from and superior to animals. Without it man was bestial and animalistic; eloquent linguistic control was not only believed to endow man with power over the world and other individuals, it 'civilized the human mind and tamed the wilder impulses of the human heart, thus both improving the individual's existence and making social life possible' (Herrick 2009: 170). The link between language and man's status as 'zoon politikon' goes back to Aristotle, who in his *Politics* writes

> It is thus clear that man is a political animal, in a higher degree than bees or other gregarious animals. Nature, according to our theory, makes nothing in vain; and man alone of all the animals is furnished with the faculty of language. The mere making of sounds serves to indicate pleasure and pain, and is thus a faculty that belongs to animals in general; their nature enables them to attain the point at which they have perceptions of pleasure or pain, and can signify those perceptions to one another. But language serves to declare what is advantageous and what is the reverse, and it is the peculiarity of man, in comparison with other animals, that he alone possesses a perception of good and evil, of the just and the unjust, and other similar qualities; and it is association in these things which makes a family and a city. (1995: 10-11)

Celestina's success in Spain and Italy coincided with a period when language was at the forefront of intellectual concern and when a great many treatises, grammars, and philological studies were written and printed.[1] In Italy the *questione della lingua* sought to establish linguistic norms and codify the use of the vernacular as well as to establish which Italian dialect was most suitable for literary activity.[2] But questions about language were not confined to theoretical linguistic debates; rather they were widely diffused through philosophical and literary discussions, framing the way in which arguments about other issues, such as the human condition, were manifested. E. Michael Gerli notes that Spain, too, 'was haunted with questions of language and authority,' an obsession that was expressed

> not only in scholarly polemic but in the production of grammars and vocabularies (e.g., of Nebrija and Alonso de Palencia), as well as in implicit articulations of the problem in belletristic texts [...]. As lay culture experienced a veritable explosion of vernacular literacy and textuality in the form of poetry, theology, historiography, rhetoric, and philosophy — not to mention the burgeoning bureaucracy devised to govern an increasingly powerful monarchy and centralized state — language became a locus of inquiry, meditation, and anxiety in the early modern intellectual life of Iberia. (1998: 182)

As Gerli intimates in his mention of government and state, such linguistic debates were also part of a broader concern. What is evident in later medieval and Renaissance discussions about language is an underlying preoccupation with the social function of language and its role in the formation of self and society.

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[1] Noted by Gravelle (1988: 371).

[2] Hall (1942) gives a brief overview of the main aspects of the debate, the works produced and personalities involved.

The association between language and society can be seen in Antonio de Nebrija's *Gramática de la lengua castellana* (1492). Here Nebrija advocates language as a powerful unifying and civilising force, associating it with the civilisation of 'barbarians', the establishment of law and order in civil society, and the expansion of territory and trade:

> Despues que vuestra alteza mestiesse debaxo de su iugo muchos pueblos barbaros y naciones de peregrinas lenguas: y con el vencimiento a quellos ternian necesidad de recibir las leies: quel vencedor pone al vencido y con ellas nuestra lengua […]. I cierto assí es que no sola mente los enemigos de nuestra fe, que tienen ia necessidad de saber el lenguaje castellano: mas los vizcainos, navarrros, franceses, italianos, y todos los otros *que tienen algún trato y conversación* en España y necesidad de nuestra lenguaje. (Nebrija 1980: 102)[3]

It is interesting that Nebrija's concern is not the perfecting of the individual but the effect of language upon social and political relationships that it enables. In the *Gramática castellana* language is inherently tied to social and political identity and life on a collective, *national* level: the *crónicas* and *historias* in which the nation's history is written rely for their success on there being one language; otherwise what is the point of recording greatness for posterity if future generations are unable to understand it (Nebrija 1980: 101)? It is for this reason that language needed to be controlled: 'para lo que agora y de aqui adelante en él se escriviere pueda quedar en un tenor, y estenderse en toda la duración de los tiempos que están por venir' (Nebrija 1980: 100). Consequently, Nebrija focuses on the

[3] Mignolo (2003: 34-41) states that Nebrija was engaging with Lorenzo Valla's ideas about the use of language as a unifying and civilising force, and how it represented a new spirit of *armas y letras* in which words, not weapons, were put into action in the service of nationalist aspirations.

dominant centre and allows for little linguistic difference within the Peninsula. Indeed, in his dedication to Isabel la Católica, Nebrija represents the court as the locus of civilizing development, writing that his aim is to 'sacar la novedad desta mi obra de la sombra y tinieblas escolásticas a la luz de vuestra corte' (1980: 102). The fact that mankind had speech was ontologically important, but it also played a key role in defining an individual's *social* identity, as Nebrija here suggests. How – or what – one spoke and who one was within a specific social group being inherently associated.[4] If 'speech was understood as the essential bond of human societies' (Richards 2003: 168), then the role it played in the highly competitive and politically fraught world of the court was particularly important.[5]

Courtliness was a discourse, ideology, and set of conventions designed to overcome difference and enable social relationships between individuals with often competing interests, and in which language played a fundamental unifying role. This can be seen in Vincenzo Calameta's *Della lingua cortigiana* (ca. 1500-10), which calls for the development of a standardised 'courtly language'. Identifying with a universal courtly culture rather than local feudal courts, Calameta wanted a language that would be equally comprehensible throughout the peninsula and thus represent the courtier's identity and elite position on a collective level (Rebhorn 1983: 70). The function of such a language was to define one's membership of and position within a particular group based upon shared conventions and values that transcended national and geographical boundaries.

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[4] See Herrick on language, commonality, and shared identification (2009: 10).

[5] The concept of courtliness is far broader than its association with romantic love. Tied to political and social needs, it constitutes 'a code that regulated the whole economy of social interaction' (Jaeger 1985: 113). See Huizinga (1970), Elias (1982; 1983), Jaeger (1985) and Johnston (1988) on the court as a place of conflict whose aim is position and power. More recently, Richards looks at how 'civil conversations' – courtesy books – were used 'as a means to explore social, economic and political exchange' (2003: 168).

If language was the basis of social cohesion within this social group on a macro level horizontally, it simultaneously constituted a key boundary between the 'courtly' and the 'non courtly', stratifying society in a vertical hierarchy based on linguistic behaviour.[6]

It should come as little surprise, then, that discussion of 'il perfetto cortegiano' in Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano*, which is aimed at a supra-national community of readers and writers united by shared conventions and learning, is launched with an initial reference to ongoing contemporary linguistic debates. At the beginning of Book One characters discuss the conventions of eloquent speech and writing, the status of the vernacular in comparison with Latin, and the merits of Tuscan as the standard vernacular literary language. Federico Fregoso, who leads the discussion, demonstrates concern for the multitude of competing vernaculars in the Italian peninsula and the affect of this upon social cohesion: comprised of independent nation states and republics 'le consuetudini sono molto varie, né è città nobile in Italia che non abbia diversa maniera di parlar da tutte l'altre' (1981: I, 137).[7] Fregoso argues that a standard vernacular language is necessary to replace Latin, which had previously unified a supra-national community of language users, and to ensure mutual understanding. Without this 'guiding hand' man 'va tentoni, come chi cammina per le tenebre senza lume e però spesso erra la strada' (2009: I, 137). Without the 'light', aka civility and cohesion, of a unifying language, man would be lost in a linguistic maze, cut off from sense and isolated from society.

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[6] See Elias (1982) on the differences in speech between noble and non-noble groups in early modern Europe.

[7] All citations to *Il Cortegiano* in Italian are from the edition by Maier (1981); Spanish citations are taken from the edition by Reyes Cano (2009); book and page numbers are given for both in parentheses.

Wayne Rebhorn argues convincingly that the linguistic system is presented at the start of *Il Cortegiano* by Castiglione as a synecdoche for the larger socio-cultural system of which it is a part: such issues are introduced at the very start of the work 'because the definition of the courtier's use of language [...] construct[s] a fairly precise, detailed, powerful model for all aspects of courtly behaviour' (1983: 71). The language in which courtly relationships should take place was not the only issue at hand; these debates also extol linguistic prowess as one of the primary elements by which an individual's courtly identity was determined. In his description of the art of courtliness in the prologue to his *cancionero*, Juan Alfonso de Baena lists specific literary and linguistic activity and skills, which as well as a talent for poetry include the recommendation that the courtier 'sepa de todos lenguajes'.[8] Along with the sentimental romances, *cancionero* poetry formed part of the same horizon of expectations of *Celestina*'s reception, being widely printed and read in the sixteenth century – an environment in which the links between language, self, and society were being theorised and explored. Gerli contends, rightly I believe, that the self-conscious exploration of and anxiety about the mediatory role of language found in courtly works such as the *cancionero* is not an anachronism imposed by modern readers but rather one of the central intellectual predicaments of fifteenth-century and, by extension I would argue, sixteenth-century court culture (1998: 173, 180).

Baena's advice is echoed in later works dealing with courtliness, such as Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, where the need for language skills and 'good conversation' are underscored by sixteenth-century editorial and print strategies. For example, in the 1547 edition from the press of Aldo Manuzio not only are

[8] The prologue is cited in Johnston (1988: 236-237).

issues such as 'Come s'ha da governare il Cortegiano nel scrivere et nel parlare' and 'Com'ha da conversar co i pari' noted in the *tavola* at the end of the book (for an example of which from a later edition see Appendix 1, fig. 6), but in the list of important 'courtly' qualities we find 'saper diversi linguaggi, & massime il Spagnolo, & Francese'. The paratextual material used to promote the Spanish translation by Juan Boscán replicates this association between courtly speech and courtly identity. In the editions of *El Cortesano* that include a *tabla* (normally those after 1560) the same linguistic issues are highlighted: for example in the 1569 Valladolid edition by Francisco Fernández de Cordoba we find listed 'como ha de huyr el cortesano la afetacion en el hablar, y en el escrivir', 'como el uso es la guia del buen hablar', 'ciertas reglas que el cortesano deve guardar en su conversacion' or 'sobre que fundamentos deve usar el cortesano a dezir sus gracias, y donayres'. Elsewhere *ladillos* act in a similar manner to draw out issues of note. When they occur in Book One of the 1539 Toledo edition, for example, it is often to underline linguistic issues, e.g. 'Del hablar y escrevir' (Fol. 30v) and 'Del escrevir' (Fol. 31r). The latter appears alongside the following section, which makes good speech and writing a prerequisite for the courtly identity and places a courtiers's linguistic ability at the centre of all that he does:

> todavia pienso que haria mas al caso mostrar al cortesano la forma que ha de tener en el hablar porque (a mí parecer) tiene mayor necessidad dello: y mas vezes se ha de aprovechar del hablar que del escrevir. Respondio el magnifico Julian entonces. Antes si vosotros quereys que nuestro cortesano sea perfecto: es

> necessario mostralle entrambas cosas. *Y aun creo que sin estas quiça todas las otras valdrian harto poco*. (Fol. 31r; my emphasis)[9]

True though it may be that Spain had no comparable linguistic debates to the *questione della lingua*, it is worth noting that the link between language, self, and society remains explicit in *El Cortesano*, as the above demonstrates. Lucia Binotti is of the opinion that *Celestina*'s reception in sixteenth-century Spain did not take place in a comparable context of linguistic debate and argues that 'middle class readers' to whom the work was marketed

> must not have identified their status and their connections to an imagined community of citizens with the cultivation of their language. Rather than seeping through to the realm of the most affordable literature of popular consumption, the linguistic discussion must have remained in Spain much more circumscribed to academic circles. (2007: 336)

Nevertheless, *Celestina*'s use and representation of language was clearly a factor in its success. There is evidence that the text was used as a didactic exemplar in classes on poetics and rhetoric and that it was lauded for teaching 'good conversation'.[10] A focus of praise was its elegant style and persuasive rhetoric: Juan de Valdés in the *Dialogo de la lengua* (1535) states that 'ningún libro ay en castellano donde la lengua sté más natural, más propia y más elegante' (1998: 255). This attitude mirrors Rojas's own confession that what first attracted him

[9] The corresponding Italian from Maier's edition is: 'più farebbe al proposito nostro, se voi, c'insegnaste di che modo debba parlar il cortediano, perché parmi che n'abbia maggior bisogno e più spesso gli occorra il servirsi del parlare che dello scrivere –. Rispose il Magnifico: – Anzi a cortegian tanto eccellente e così perfetto non è dubbio che l'uno e l'alto è neccessario a sapere, e che senza queste due condizioni forse tutte l'altre sariano non molto degne di laude' (Castiglione 1981: 138).

[10] See Canet Vallés (1997: 50-51; cited in Binotti 2007: 327) and Blanco (2001: 45-47; cited in Binotti 2007: 328).

to the found fragment was 'su sotil artificio, su fuerte y claro metal, su modo y manera de labor, su estilo elegante, jamás en nuestra castellana lengua visto ni oído' (Rojas 2000: 6).

Set in an urban oligarchy and involving servants, prostitutes and go-betweens, *Celestina* hardly represents the traditional courtly environment. Nevertheless, in its appropriation to Italy the editorial strategies used in certain editions acknowledge the relationship between courtliness and linguistic skill. The Castilian editions printed in Venice by Nicolini da Sabio (1534) and Gabriel Giolito di Ferrarii (1553) include 'Introductions' to Castilian by Francisco Delicado and Alfonso de Ulloa respectively.[11] Placed directly after the verses added by the work's first editor, Alonso de Proaza, they reiterate his message about the fundamental role of language. Both Delicado and Ulloa include an outline of the differences between the Italian and Spanish and a pronunciation guide, while the latter also adds a glossary of difficult terms. Ulloa's introduction, later by nearly twenty years, furthermore more evidently places *Celestina* within a community bound together by its use of a certain type of discourse. To illustrate linguistic points Ulloa chooses 'semantic constellations of words that seem to echo the nostalgic courtly setting his urbane readers would most likely expect', and showcases 'Italianate words that called on the spirit of sophisticated courtly manners' (Binotti 2007: 334-335) – thereby associating *Celestina* with a particular social use of language. This evolution is matched by the book's material form. The 1534 edition remained 'Spanish' in form; it is very similar to the 1523 Seville edition in its use of gothic typeface and woodcut illustrations, making it a more

[11] Binotti (2007) provides a thorough examination of these editions' material forms, prologues, and editorial strategies.

starkly 'exotic' and 'foreign' consumable. In comparison, the 1553 edition (which was re-printed in 1556) fully appropriates *Celestina* into the Italian textual context (see Appendix 1, figs. 7 and 8). According to Binotti, Ulloa promoted it as one of several 'great' works he hoped to spread to Italy (another being Pérez de Oliva's *Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre*) due to the long and illustrious vernacular tradition to which it belonged (2007: 321-322).

Moving away from editorial strategies to the works themselves, it is clear that *Celestina* and *Il Cortegiano* are both situated within particular social communities. Rojas presents dialogue as the means by which disparate elements – author, friend, reader – are brought together; he situates *Celestina* 'not only within a textual dialogue with a friend and benefactor as invoked by the *Carta*, but also within a textual community of readers and critics' (Brocato 1996: 112). *Il Cortegiano* is both directed at a particular social community and depicts a group of individuals engaged in courtly conversation with a specific *linguistic* aim – to 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano' – i.e. to create through their very words the perfect representative of courtliness. This phrase, which forms the starting point for this chapter's discussion, is translated slightly differently by Boscán, who omits the reference to the central role that language plays in this process, rendering it simply as 'formar un perfecto cortesano'. Nevertheless, the paratextual material added by Boscán and Garcilaso de la Vega gives similar testimonies to the capacity for words to 'gestar identidades' (Lorenzo 2005: 250). The paratexts constitute, according to Javier Lorenzo,

> no sólo un ejercicio lingüístico y literario de transmisión cultural, sino también un acto flagrante de autorrepresentación que le

> permite definirse y presentarse ante el público como miembro de la elite cortesana. (2005: 250)

Translating *Il Cortegiano* allows Boscán not only to represent – i.e. make available – this model of courtliness for Spanish readers, but also represent *himself* as the very incarnation of such a model and to transpose himself into this elite social group (Regosin 1988: 32).

As well as pointing to the linguistic skills required by the courtly identity, the phrase 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano' underlines the way in which selfhood is communally created. This is an argument made by Stephen Greenblatt, in his concept of 'self-fashioning' – the idea that in the sixteenth century 'there were both selves and a sense that they could be fashioned' (1980: 1). Greenblatt contends that language is always, though not exclusively, the means by which the studied and self-conscious process of constructing and projecting an identity takes place (1980: 3, 9). His notion of 'self-fashioning' is useful because it recognises that the self being formed is not wholly autonomous and that the social circumstances in which it takes place cannot be ignored. This awareness that the generation of identities in the Renaissance was not individualistic but inherently and inextricably social – 'resolutely dialectical' (Greenblatt 1980: 1) – is reflected upon by Greenblatt in the conclusion to his book. Here the critic observes that 'fashioning oneself and being fashioned by cultural institutions – family, religion, state – were inseparably intertwined' (Greenblatt 1980: 256). The tension between these two poles – self and society – form an ever-present background to both *Celestina* and *Il Cortegiano*'s explorations of the fashioning of the courtly self and social cohesion through words, or how to 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano'.

Forming and Transforming

In his edition of *Il Cortegiano* Bruno Maier notes that while it signifies 'Descrivere, delineare, tratteggiare' ('to describe' or 'to sketch'), the term 'formar con parole' as used by Federico Fregoso 'è più intensa ed efficace e fa pensare ad un ritratto compiuto del cortigiano perfetto' (Castiglione 1981: 102, n. 8). Visual artistry is explicitly associated with linguistic skill elsewhere in the work, such as in Book I where Count Ludovico, who is tasked with the duty of explaining the courtier's use of the vernacular, describes the abilities required. The perfect courtier must know how to

> pigliare le più significative di ciò che vuole dire e innalzarle. E como cera formandole ad arbitrio suo, collocarle in tale parte e con tale ordine, che al primo aspetto mostrino e faciano conoscere la dignità e splendore suo, come tavole di pittura poste al suo buono e naturale lume. (Castiglione 1981: I, 61)

Here Ludovico's words describe the speaker or author as an artist who manipulates words as if they were raw materials like paint, stone, and metal, which are sculpted or drawn into a meaningful compositions according to his will. As in Maier's interpretation, references to the process of 'formar con parole' as being like painting or sculpting reflect a traditional rhetorical view of language. They suggest the Humanist idea that language was a fully-formed object that could be consciously appropriated, and that man had control over his thoughts and needed only to find the right words in order to express them.

Secondary criticism that addresses courtliness and linguistic behaviour has often discussed this topic in terms of a binary between appearance and reality, separating language from the 'real' world. Critics use imagery of performance, masking and dissembling, and games of revelation and concealment to conceptualise it (Javitch 1972: 873-74; Rebhorn 1978: 14; Regosin 1988). For Gerli, courtliness is a craft of counterfeit – *fingir* and *fingimiento* being terms frequently found in courtly works (1998: 174); Joseph Falvo likewise describes courtliness as a 'phantasmal world'

> whose secret of impression consists in the knowledge and ability to present [oneself] not so much as 'content' but as 'form,' constructing a social image that precedes and prepares the way in every event and on every occasion. (1992: 69)

It must be recognised that Rojas is himself informed by entirely conventional rhetorical traditions.[12] As in *Il Cortegiano*, language is conceived in visual terms in the closing stanzas of *Celestina*'s first editor, Alonso de Proaza, which appear in editions in both peninsulas: Latin and Greek writers have never 'debujó' characters and situations as skilfully as Rojas does in Castilian (Rojas 2000: 352). Similarly to Castiglione, Rojas also recognises that games of revelation, concealment, and dissimulation are very much part of language and identity. The courtly self and relationships depicted and aspired to in *Celestina* have been understood as mere fantasy, an 'unreal, literary presence' to cite Emma Gatland's description (2007: 86) existing within a larger 'real-life' situation. This is noted by several other scholars, among them George A. Shipley (1975),

[12] Morgan (1979: 7-18), Fraker (1990: 43), and Friedman (1993: 359-370) argue that *Celestina* is profoundly rhetorical.

Malcolm Read (1978), E. Michael Gerli (1988), and Dorothy Severin (1989). These critics advocate a binary between the 'world of fantasy' in which Calisto and Melibea live out their affair and the 'world of man', the seedy, commercial reality in which their self-fashioning as courtly lovers takes place. Read, for example, describes Melibea and Calisto as living out and prolonging their fantasies through language, thereby avoiding events in the 'real world': 'she longs to linger in fantasy and in dialogue, and makes the transition from language to carnal act with difficulty', and 'His is the dream world of the pure pleasure ego, in which wishes are true and the imagination merges with reality' (1978: 166). Severin suggests that the lovers exemplify 'the creation of "literary" people with their literary way of thinking and their literary way of doing things' (1989: 21). The use of quotation marks to represent 'literary' suggests that their discursively-created identities are unreal and fantastical, something completely separate from how they behave otherwise in 'real life'. Yet I would argue that what *Celestina* actually shows in the narrative goes beyond this. Rojas's work questions the assumption that the two 'worlds' *are* split.

My approach in this chapter breaks down this binary between fantasy and reality. I contend that spatial conceptualisations of inner and outer are ultimately not helpful: as *Celestina* demonstrates man is both courtly and base, civilised and vulgar. Rather I believe another way of approaching the representation of the language and self-fashioning in *Celestina* is possible, one that recognises the materiality of words. Language is not simply a superficial 'mask' appropriated to cover an inner truth or an empty vessel awaiting a significance imparted by human use; neither is it merely an 'operational' tool used as a 'vehicle' to express what individuals think and feel (Read 1978: 163, 175), or to represent what

already exists. Rather it is the site at which emotions and thoughts are created and experienced and the world formed and transformed. Of course, this is not to suggest that this is the only way in which the world can be experienced, rather that language and self are not separate entities. *Celestina* shows that language precedes consciousness; that we are born into a world that is linguistic and discursive at its very heart, and whose entire complex web of social relations is constructed through words.

It is my contention that *Celestina* thus offers an exploration of an un-theorised capacity of language – one that is suggested by Castiglione's phrase, 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano'. This capacity can be summarised as what Joseph Falvo labels the 'generative' nature of language (1992: 40); that is, the potential power it has to form and transform ways of being, experiences, and relationships.[13] Kenneth Burke writes that 'the members of a group promote social cohesion by acting rhetorically upon themselves and one another' (1969: xiv; cited in Simons 2004: 159); however, they are also acted *upon* by language. As we will see, Rojas's approach to language, self, and society de-centres the Humanist notion that man has complete dominance over the power of words, showing instead that we are formed and transformed by them.

Inés Azar claims that 'except for making love, killing and dying, the story of *La Celestina* is a story of speech acts' (1984: 6-7): more than mere symbols, the words of characters in *Celestina* act directly upon the world around them. I would like to take Azar's view of language's performativity, which is based upon the work of Speech Act theorists such as J. L. Austin, one step further by engaging

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[13] Despite his binary approach, Read does acknowledge language's potential power, suggesting that it can, independently of man's guidance, impose upon the world: its effects 'are unpredictable; it works its power insidiously, treacherously and unobserved' (1978: 165).

with materialist theories proposed by V. N. Voloshinov and Mikhail Bakhtin. Rather than abstracting or separating language from the world, Bakhtin and Voloshinov ground it in material reality and locate it in the very life of society, and vice versa.[14] They contend that we are born *into* language and exist *in* and *through* it. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Voloshinov writes that:

> The experiential, expressible element and its outward objectification are created, as we know, out of one and the same material. After all, there is no such thing as experience outside of embodiment in signs. [...] Furthermore, the location of the organizing and formative center is not within (i.e. not in the material of inner signs) but outside. It is not experience that organizes expression, but the other way round – *expression organizes experience*. Expression is what first gives experience its form and specificity of direction. (Dentith 1995: 129; emphasis author's own)[15]

Bakhtin and Voloshinov argue that language is inherently dialogic: words exist in chain of continuity bound inextricably not only to speaker and recipient but to previous socio-historical instances of their use. They carry what could be termed 'baggage' – different accents, emphases, meanings, and inflections that occur depending on the context. Because man and language are fused together their influence on one another cannot be anything other than reciprocal, and this 'multiaccentuality' of words is able to provoke actions and reactions in man almost unconsciously.[16] Thus, while an individual may to a certain extent choose how he/she engages with the history or previous use of a word – rejecting,

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[14] See Dentith (1995: 22).

[15] Citations from Voloshinov (1986) and Bakhtin (1981) are taken from Dentith (1995), who reproduces sections from both authors' works.

[16] The term is Voloshinov's; see Dentith (1995: 23-24).

altering, adding to it – language itself nevertheless brings an innate influence to bear on self and society.

Celestina exemplifies the infusion of language into the very fabric of the world.[17] In Act I, for example, Pármeno describes the way in which the mere mention of Celestina's name affects the world around: dogs on the street bark her name, birds sing it, beasts in the wild bellow it; workmen's tools sound it out. The very act of voicing it causes a whole chain reaction to occur. In short: 'Toda cosa que son hace, a doquiera que ella está, el tal nombre representa. [...] ¿Qué quieres más sino que, si una piedra topa con otra, luego suena "¡Puta vieja!"' (Rojas 2000 53-54). The power of language to form and transform the world is furthermore addressed in the *Tragicomedia*'s paratextual material, where Proaza's verses also emphasise the impact of speech.[18] His opening stanza references the harp of Orpheus, which was said to be able to bring inanimate objects to life:

> La harpa de Orfeo y dulce armonía
> forzaba las piedras venir a su son,
> abríe los palacios del triste Plutón,
> las rápidas aguas parar las hacía;
> ni ave volaba ni bruto pacía;
> ella asentaba en los muros troyanos
> las piedras y froga[19] si fuerza de manos,
> según la dulzura con que se tañía. (Rojas 2000: 351)

> Se Orpheo con la sua cetra e melodia
> Forzava sassi e monti ase venire,

[17] Gaylord comments that it 'fills the space of the play's entertainment (*entre-tenimiento*, literally a holding between) and of life' (1991: 8).

[18] On the power of sound see Burke (2000: 79-102).

[19] Lobera et al explain 'froga' as 'obra de albañilería' (Rojas 2000: 351, n. 4)

> Ei fiumi adrieto repigliar la via
> Ela cuncha infernal tutta adolcire;
> Se ogni arbor hogni fera alarmonia,
> Atento facea far el suon seguire,
> Dunque non ti admirar sel nostro autore
> A chi lobserva da maggior vigore. (Rojas 1973: 260-261)

Whereas Proaza includes references to classical myth and legend, and talks of the power of sound to open palaces, build walls, and drain stonework and masonry of strength, the Italian translation omits these and places more direct emphasis upon the effects of the words ('adolcire') and their 'maggior vigore', enhancing the directness of Proaza's message. In these descriptions readers would have been confronted with a similar encouragement to consider the power spoken words had to move readers and create the very world about which they were reading/listening.

Proaza clearly encourages readers to read *Celestina* aloud in order to gain the most impact from the written words. Deyermond is of the opinion that Proaza's focus on this form of dissemination is strange since 'the primacy of hearers over readers is hard to reconcile with the immediate and sustained success among the book-buying public' (2000: 32). He argues that

> it must have been clear when he [Proaza] wrote that stanza, that many people were buying the book in order to read it in private. He was, I suspect, thinking of the days before the *Comedia* was printed, when it circulated in manuscript and when most of those who knew it had heard it read aloud (and perhaps Rojas was also thinking of that when he wrote about the group of ten persons). (2000: 32-33)

Yet Deyermond does not take into account the influence of the oral and the public way in which reading was still undertaken in the sixteenth century. Despite the impact of the printing press, oral forms of communication did not simply vanish or decrease in importance. If anything, in the early modern period into which *Celestina* was received we see a renewed appreciation for the function and power of spoken language, and literary creation and production would still have been determined by oral and verbal modes of communication. Rigolot agrees, stating that 'In an age that saw the introduction of the printing-press, oral reciting was also used as a powerful metaphor to convey a sense of linguistic immediacy' (2008: 167). The prevalence of dialogue as a literary form at the height of *Celestina*'s popularity in Spain and Italy is perhaps an indication of this.[20] *Celestina*'s form would have been familiar to audiences who were accustomed to experiencing and working through contemporary issues via a set of interlocutors engaged in a dialogue, and aware of contemporary ideas about the nature and reach of language to form and transform the world around them.

The central role of speech in the formation and transformation of self and society is highlighted in Act II by the young servant, Pármeno, who remarks that it is the power of words that generate Calisto's love for Melibea – 'la entrada [en la huerta de Melibea] causa de la veer y hablar; la habla engendró amor' (Rojas 2000: 89). I would contend that this generative potential can be fruitfully explored through Voloshinov's idea that 'language presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming' (Dentith 1995: 109). When applied to both *Il Cortegiano* and *Celestina* Voloshinov's theory suggests a way of understanding how characters are continuously fashioned and fashion themselves by and through

[20] This has been noted by Marsh (2008: 264).

their words. Language, Voloshinov argues, 'is a continuous generative process implemented in the social-verbal interaction of speakers' (Dentith 1995: 143). The 'perfetto cortegiano' of Castiglione's work does not already exist but has to be constructed 'con parole', both his own and those of the other interlocutors in the dialogue, who are by this very process in turn constructing their own courtly identities.

Likewise, the identities of Calisto and Melibea, *Celestina*'s two aspiring courtly lovers, are not fully-formed 'masks' that can be superimposed upon a pre-existing yet hidden 'true' self to create something that is superficially different. Rather, as in *Il Cortegiano*, it is by immersing themselves in courtly language and through their discourse with one another that they form and transform themselves and their experiences. Courtliness is

> *that which forms itself through its art – with words or with other signs*, as we shall see—and that which performs itself to earn the name of courtier [...] not a state or a mode of being but an attribution, a name given – and taken away – by a public which judges the performance; it is *not a signified but a signifier*. (Regosin 1988: 24; my emphasis)[21]

As their attempts to 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano' reveal, Calisto and Melibea are clearly aware of language's role in self-fashioning, how in speaking a certain way they can 'gestar identidades' (to use Lorenzo's phrase), courtly language begetting an equally courtly self. The way that they do so, however, differs from the method suggested by Castiglione's characters.

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[21] See also Navarrete (1994: 45).

In *Il Cortegiano* aspiring courtiers are advised to observe and imitate the behaviour of others around them at court: 'Chi adunque vorrà bon discipulo, oltre al far le cose bene, sempre ha da metter ogni diligenzia per assimigliarsi al maestro e, se possibile fossem transformarsi in lui' (Castiglione 1981: I, 126-27).[22] Distanced from the ideal courtly environment, however, Calisto and Melibea construct their identities by appropriating behaviour and values from *literary* models. Pointing to the way in which discourse – language in a specific use – self, and society interact, Severin contends that Calisto and Melibea 'live through literature' and 'have their heads turned' by poetry and prose (1989: 3, 28-29, 38-42); she is one of the few scholars to use Bakhtinian theories about language to theorise *Celestina.*[23] In *Tragicomedy and Novelistic Discourse* she goes further than other scholars in her conceptualisation of the way in which Calisto and Melibea's formation of courtly identities is undertaken through a process of intertextual dialogue with past literary and cultural discourses (Severin 1989: 3). They create their love affair and identities through a 'patching and grafting' (Brocato 1996: 104) of the voices of other people and the words of other texts that are dismembered, spliced, and penetrated into their own (Brocato 1996: 113). Indeed, they take advantage of what Bakhtin calls the dialogic quality of language, where words are 'socially marked' by previous users and accrue associations that are then contested or continued. Rojas acknowledges that language is not an 'empty vessel' but evocative and heavily associative; he refers

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[22] In *El Cortesano* Boscán glosses the rather more vague statement about diligently trying to *become like* one's master by emphasising specifically that one should appropriate his *aire* or graceful mannerisms among other unnamed things: 'mas aun ha de trabajar cuanto pudiere de tomar el aire y las otras cosas de su maestro' (Castiglione 2009: I, 125-126). 'Tener aire' has, according to Covarrubias, the meaning of 'tener gracia una cosa' (2006: 69).

[23] Deyermond (1961), Martin (1972), Friedman (1993), and Brocato (1996) have also looked at the literary sources the two lovers use to create their idenitities and affair.

in his prologue to words being 'swollen' with many meanings: 'muy hinchada y llena [...], echando de sí tan crescidos ramos y hojas' (Rojas 2000: 15).

Calisto's dialogue with Melibea in the opening scene of Act I takes advantage of the associative force of words. He constructs his courtly self through the use of certain key terms common to the discourse of courtly love upon which he bases his identity, as can be seen in the opening lines of the work:

> En esto veo, Melibea, la grandeza de Dios. [...] En dar poder a natura que de tan perfeta hermosura te dotase, y hacer a mí, inmérito, tanta merced que verte alcanzase, y en tan conveniente lugar, que mi secreto dolor manifestarte pudiese. Sin duda, incomparablemente es mayor tal galardón que el servicio, sacrificio, devoción y obras pías que, por este lugar alcanzar, yo tengo a Dios ofrecido. ¿Quién vido en esta vida cuerpo glorificado de ningún hombre como agora el mío? Por cierto, los gloriosos santos, que se deleitan en la visión divina no gozan más que yo agora en el acatamiento tuyo. Mas ¡oh triste!, que en esto diferimos, que ellos puramente se glorifican sin temor de caer de tal bienaventuranza, y yo, misto me alegro con recelo del esquivo tormento, que tu ausencia me ha de causar. (Rojas 2000: 27; 1973: 47-48)

He overloards his speech with references to commonplaces like pain, suffering, torment, pleasure, reward, service – all tropes that would have been familiar to him from literary works such as the *Roman de la Rose*, *cancionero* and other lyric poetry, sentimental romances, as well as treatises such as Andreas Capellanus's *De amore* and Ovid's *Ars amatoria*. In doing so he attempts to transform himself into the ultimate devoted lover who desires to woo his lady with sweet words.[24] But, as we will see, his is an identity in the process of being formed; it is not complete or fixed.

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[24] This has been noted by Deyermond (1961), Martin (1972: 71-134), and Severin (1989: 3).

We can also see this at work in Melibea's discourse with Lucrecia in Act XIX, when awaiting a night-time tryst with her lover. Friedman believes that Melibea 'is hidden by, or under, convention' (1993: 363-64) and is 'trapped in society, in psychological contradictions, in language' (1993: 368). However, I contend that it is through the very discourse that he claims traps her that she is able to transform herself and form a relationship with Calisto. As Voloshinov says, all experience is directed towards fully realised outward expression: it is not a matter of expression 'accommodating itself to our inner world but rather of our inner world accommodating itself to the potentialities of our expression, its possible routes and directions' (Dentith 1995: 135). Melibea's love for Calisto is created through and in her use of a particular type of language: she fashions herself and their relationship according to a discourse heavy with semantic associations.

Through the performance of songs in Act XIX she seeks to fashion an appropriately courtly setting for her liaison with Calisto, thereby transforming their meeting from an illicit affair that holds the potential to damage both her reputation and her family's honour into a noble and worthy encounter. In her singing she appropriates the evocative force of commonplace tropes of beautiful gardens, flowers, water, midnight meetings, a sleeping lover and the arrival of dawn, taken from lyric and *cancionero* poetry, to transform her father's urban garden into the beautiful *locus amoenus* of the *Roman de la Rose*: 'Mira la luna cuán clara se nos muestra. Mira las nubes cómo huyen. Oye la corriente agua desta fontecica cuánto más suave murmurio y zurrío lleva por entre las frescas yerbas!' (Rojas 2000: 320).

As with the courtly fashioning at work in Castiglione's dialogue, at the heart of this process is the desire to transform herself and the way in which she sees the world into something 'noble'. And yet, her attempt is undermined by Lucrecia's responses, which juxtapose discordant and parodical elements alongside Melibea's courtly ones: 'viciosas flores' and hunt imagery, the wolf that is directly associated with her and Calisto – 'Saltos de gozo infinitos / da el lobo viendo ganado; / con las tetas, los cabritos; / Melibea con su amado' (Rojas 2000: 318). The Italian translation subsitutes 'viendo ganado' for 'cha predato' (Rojas 1973: 241), emphasising the predatory, bestial qualities of the lover even further.[25] As is commonly acknowledged Rojas was adept at these sorts of disjunctions that twist and subvert expected conventions.[26] Severin states that

> [Rojas's] characters are transformations of existing literary clichés, but in their new incarnations they destroy the old conventions and create new ones. A primary target of this process of destruction and recreation is courtly love and the courtly lover. (1989: 21)

While I do not deny the critical edge to the parody of courtliness and courtly love in *Celestina*, I think something more is potentially happening. As I will show, the target of the work's criticism is not simply the ineffectual courtly lovers but language itself and its generative and cohesive function, which all characters use to form and transform themselves and society.

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[25] 'Predato' being past participle of *predare*, 'to prey on, to ravage', and 'cha' an elision of 'che ha'.

[26] See Severin: '*Celestina* is a tapestry of literary allusion and quotation; almost every speech is somehow indebted to a previous literary source, but Rojas distorts these sources, he parodies them, distorts them, satirizes them, and mocks them' (1989: 21).

Calisto and Melibea's discourse is not an artificial 'fantasy' in opposition to their daily 'reality'. Rather than a tool of expression, *Celestina* shows that language is the very site of physical and emotional experiences. Characters' sexual activity, friendships, even their deaths are all lived through their discourse. This is exemplified in Act VI: when Calisto feverishly awaits news of Melibea he dreams of *speaking* to her and *hearing* her words, not simply seeing her. Nearly swooning with delight when Celestina recounts her conversation with Melibea, he derives a large part of his pleasure simply from the act of listening. It magnifies and extends his experience of love and suffering: '¡Oh gozo sin par, oh singular oportunidad, oh oportuno tiempo! ¡Oh, quien estuviera allí debajo de tu manto, escuchando qué hablaría sola aquella en quien Dios tan estremadas gracias puso!' (Rojas 2000: 149). Celestina also draws attention to this function of language in her rhetorical persuasions of Pármeno in Act I. Her argument is built around the conceit that experiences and emotions are enhanced and relived when shared in speech:

> El deleite es con los amigos en las cosas sensuales, y especial en recontar las cosas de amores y comunicarlas: 'Esto hice, esto otro me dijo; tal donaire pasamos, de tal manera la tome, así la besé, así me mordió, así la abracé, así se allegó. ¡Oh qué habla! ¡Oh qué gracia! ¡Oh qué juegos! ¡Oh, qué besos! (Rojas 2000: 77)[27]

She continues her argument with the rhetorical question: '¿hay deleite sin compañía? ¡Alahé, alahé! La que las sabe las tañe. Este es el deleite; que lo ál, mejor lo hacen los asnos en el prado' (Rojas 2000: 78). Celestina's words point to

[27] The Italian translation keeps the emphasis upon the delights of speech, sharing events with another, and thus also re-experiencing them (Rojas 1973: 73).

the function of language in constructing self-hood, reminding us of the medieval and Renaissance commonplace that a person without speech is less than human.[28] However, her conceit serves a greater tactical purpose, too: to persuade the young servant to befriend Sempronio. In doing so she recalls how man's definition as a 'social being' is predicated upon his use of discourse to form relationships with other individuals.

Courtliness and Community

As *Il Cortegiano* demonstrates, the process of 'formar con parole il perfetto cortegiano' is a collective activity, the self that is fashioned is always in opposition to *another*, whether a single individual or a whole community. When read in light of this statement, Calisto and Melibea's attempts to become courtly lovers together can be seen in a new light. Gilman suggests that in the *Tragicomedia* 'Language is almost never allowed an existence on its own terms apart from speech, the speech of two persons facing each other' (1956: 22-23). The young lovers exist not in isolation or autonomously, but rather in a dialogic relationship with one another, representing the meeting of two lives, forever directed towards a *tú* and a *yo* (Gilman 1956: 19, 20). As well as fashioning individual courtly identities, Calisto and Melibea simultaneously seek to create a social relationship out of their words. A comparative reading with Castiglione's work demonstrates

[28] 'The wild man may be without the faculty of human speech, the power to recognize or conceive of the Divinity, or the usual meaningful processes of the mind. What remains after losses of this kind of magnitude, is a creature human only in overall physical appearance, but so degenerate that to call him a beast were more than an empty metaphor'(Bernheimer 1952: 9; cited in Brownlee 1990: 212, n. 2).

more clearly how *Celestina* engages with these ideas; however, as ever it does so in a way that critiques as well as qualifies them. Dentith reminds us that 'language and linguistic interaction are the very means by which society *in all its conflicts and contradictoriness* is realised' (1995: 27; my emphasis). For example, Lucrecia's interjections during Melibea's singing in Act XIX reveal that any discourse can be punctured or disrupted by another. To explore this I turn now to to instances in *Celestina* when these two aspiring courtly lovers interact, reading them in light of the conventions espoused by *Il Cortegiano*.

Conversation between men and women was an important aspect of courtliness, something Calisto is clearly aware of, as his behaviour in the passage from Act I cited above shows. It presented an opportunity to show off one's wit and linguistic skills in a game of suggestion that the beloved was required to unravel. In Book Three of in *Il Cortegiano*, led by the Magnifico Giuliano, discussion turns to how to broach one's love to a lady. It is advised:

> che le parole prime tentino l'animo e tocchino tanto ambiguamente la voluntà di lei, che le lascino modo e un certo esito di poter simulare di non conoscere che quei ragionamenti importino amore. (Castiglione 1981: III, 435)

> que sus palabras sean muy disimuladas y solamente sirvan a tentar el vado, y díganse con un velo, o por decillo así, con una neutralidad que dexen a la dama a quien se dixeren camino para poder disimulallas, o salida para echallas a otro sentimiento que no sea de amores. (Castiglione 2009: III, 359-360)

In both the Italian original and Castillian translation *fingimiento* is foreground; but these extracts also point to another element – the need to find common ground in order for courtly relationships to work. Castiglione's text encourages the

reader to first test and tempt the lady's mind with his words and influence her will with a display of ambiguity that will enable both interlocutors to 'save face' and pretend that their discourse is about anything other than love if required. Boscán's translation glosses the Italian original and places more emphasis upon the need for dissembling with the addition of 'disimuladas' and 'díganse con un velo [...] con una neutralidad', and discarding references to the mind and will. The Castillian underlines the role of the speaker far more in veiling his language and cautiously testing the water with his words. 'Tentar el vado' has the sense of creating and experimenting with subject positions to find the right one from which to connect with a lover.[29] In *Il Cortegiano*, it is assumed that the courtier will be engaging with women who are themselves conversant and willing participants in the game at hand. It is this aspect of courtly discourse that Calisto misreads – not simply the individual tropes, as scholars like Deyermond and Martin have addressed, but the social situation itself.

Calisto is using one particular discourse without establishing whether his speaker is similarly willing to engage in this courtly game. As a result what occurs is a conflict between their respective expectations and subject positions. There is no sense of subtlety in Calisto's words in Act I – he steams in with an opening line that reveals his whole hand, not to mention his barely concealed lusty desires. Comparing his methods with the conventions of *Il Cortegiano* we can see that there is no allowance for courtly play, for the game of dissembling, no requirement on Melibea to unravel his intentions. His speech, while veiled in the

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[29] Covarrubias: 'tentar', from the Latin *tentare*: 'Tiene diversas significaciones, como tentar con la mano el ciego o el que está a escuras. Tentar a otro, probarle de industria. Tentar el vado, mirar si está hondo' (2006: 1466); under 'vado' the following explanation also appears: 'Tentar el vado, metafóricamente intentar algún negocio con recato y cordura' (2006: 1506).

euphemisms of courtly love is nevertheless dangerously easy to interpret.[30] By referring to loaded terms as 'merced' and 'galardón' so early on in his courtship and to rather telling things such as his 'secreto dolor' and her 'cuerpo glorificado' Calisto makes it plain for anyone who may be aware of the sexual undertones of these terms exactly what he is after. Indeed, as Martin comments, 'His intentions are all too clear. It is not surprising that Melibea finally orders him and his lewd hopes out of her garden' (1972: 77). He gives her no opportunity to engage in the game, no chance to negotiate and find common ground from which to converse. Melibea's response – the angry, sharply dismissive if not coarse exclamation '¡vete vete de ahí torpe!' (Rojas 2000: 28) – is also not wholly typical of the speech of female characters in courtly situations and it skews the rules of 'good conversation' for women discussed in *Il Cortegiano*, falling into the trap against which the Magnifico warns of showing *too much* anger. The Magnifico stresses that women should not 'esser tanto ritrosa e mostrar tanto d'aborrire e le compagnie e i ragionamenti ancor un poco lascivi' (Castiglione 1981: III, 349-50) otherwise they will give their audience reason to think or suspect 'ch'ella fingesse d'esser tanto austera per nascondere di sé quello ch'ella dubitasse che altri potesse risapere' (Castiglione 1981: III, 349-50). Yet Melibea's reaction is undoutedly due to the fact that at this stage she has not (yet) joined the game.[31]

Even when she does demonstrate willingness, as well as actual skill, as we see in later Acts, their relationship is frustrated by their discourse, not helped by

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[30] See Deyermond (1961: 221). Martin notes also that Calisto approaches Melibea 'as men approach only their mistresses' (1972: 75).

[31] In a constrasting view, Gerli suggests that Melibea, fully aware of the game in which she is engaging, deliberately baits Calisto, only 'finally just to censure him with declarations of resistance that feebly assert her moral superiority while disclosing full knowledge of the true business at hand: illicit love and pleasure' (2011: 142-143).

it. Nearly everything Calisto says complicates their liaison; his words do not engender comprehension and social cohesion but drive them apart. It is only Melibea's manoeuvring that prevents their discourse and nascent relationship from collapsing. Though once again rejecting him when they next meet in Act XII, Melibea does so in a far more restrained and calm manner, in terms that evoke the loss of honour and suspicion her soon-to-be lover's actions are in danger of causing. Rojas, twisting conventions again, has his lady summon her lover – an act one would expect to bring hope – only to chastise him. Calisto's reponse, however, falls far short of expected conventions too; he is deaf to Melibea's encouragement for him to continue his courtship. Taking her words at face value as rejection, he cries treachery, blaming Celestina for setting him up ('! O malaventurado Calisto! ¡O cuán burlado has sido de tus sirvientes! ¡O engañosa muger Celestina!...' Rojas 2000: 244). It is Melibea who reminds him of his role, soothes his petulant cries and tries to get their discourse back on track:

> Cesen, señor mio, tus verdaderas querellas, que ni mi corazón basta para las sufrir ni mis ojos para lo disimular. Tú lloras de tristeza, juzgándome cruel; yo lloro de placer, viéndote tan fiel. […] Limpia, señor, tus ojos; ordena de mí a tu voluntad. (Rojas 1973: 245)

Even when they are together for the first time in Act XIV, they continue to talk at cross purposes. Melibea is determined that their affair should be courtly; she describes herself as 'tu sierva, es tu cativa, es la que más tu vida que la suya estima' (Rojas 2000: 272). Yet once at her side Calisto's discourse of courtliness is replaced by one of increasing carnality. At the start of the scene in Act XIV there are lingering vestiges of the courtly code – '¡Oh angélica imagen,

oh preciosa perla ante quien el mundo es feo! ¡Oh mi señora y mi gloria!' (Rojas 2000: 272); but his words, and his hands, turn increasingly to focus on Melibea's physical being. Eventually, rather than the veiled euphemisms of courtly discourse we arrive at the outrightly erotic: 'Nadando por este huego de tu deseo toda mi vida, ¿no quieres que me arrime al dulce puerto a descansar de mis pasados trabajos?' (Rojas 2000: 273). Melibea continues to try to convince him that theirs is a relationship built on courtly *speech*:

> Por mi vida, que aunque hable tu lengua cuanto quisiere, no obren las manos cuanto pueden. Está quedo, señor mio. Bástete, pues ya soy tuya, gozar de lo esterior, desto que es propio fruto de amadores. (Rojas 2000: 273)

But Calisto insists on bringing their discourse down to the level of the body and his carnal desire. Gone is the pretence that their words have been anything other than a prelude to physical love; he is openly now desperate to enjoy her 'gentil cuerpo y lindas y delicadas carnes' (Rojas 2000: 273). Even by Act XIX, after their affair has been continuing for some time, the dynamics of their discourse remain the same – defined by the use of discursive codes that place them at loggerheads.

Melibea still frames their affair as a courtly one, evoking the courtly *locus amoenus* with her singing in Act XIX, but Calisto's speech refers increasingly and almost exclusively to physicality and sexual pleasure. He interrupts her singing with a comment that signals his hasty wish for intercourse: 'Y ¿cómo no podiste más tiempo sofrir sin interrumper tu gozo y complir el deseo de entrambos?' (Rojas 2000: 320). In response to Melibea's determined demand that their relationship be more than physical, that they express their love in other ways

– 'Holguemos y burlemos de otros mil modos que yo te mostraré; no me destroces ni maltrates como sueles' (Rojas 2000: 321) – her not-so-courtly lover's response is 'Señora, el que quiere comer el ave, quita primero las plumas' (Rojas 2000: 321) ['Madonna, colui che vol mangiar la starna, prima leva le penne' (Rojas 1973: 243)]. This statement overturns the humanist concept that language engenders *civilitas* as well as *communitas*; showing instead how it can reduce man to the level of beasts. It is worth noting that Ordóñez concretises the general reference to 'ave' here with his use of the term 'starna' or *partridge* – a change that associates Melibea with a lascivious, sexually voracious animal and that would, in the minds of audiences familiar with the bestiary tradition, have made Calisto's reference to 'plucking' even more obvious.[32] Calisto and Melibea's linguistic self-fashioning should suggest a desire to form and transform their world and themselves into the courtly ideal; but with Calisto there is little evidence of noble aspirations.

Furthermore, like Nebrija's *Gramática*, *Il Cortegiano* assumes that speaking the same language facilitates comprehension and community. Rojas, however, shows something that is as yet untheorised: not only are language, self, and society inherently intertwined; their interactions are more complex than might be supposed. Calisto and Melibea's interactions are not smoothed and made easier by their use of courtly discourse; their words do not create the micro-community they so desire. If anything, they keep them emotionally apart. The reason for this is that the lovers essentially talk at cross-purposes; they exemplify Bakhtin's

[32] The court poet Florencia Pinar is known for her *canción* about nameless, caged birds, which was later titled 'Otra canción de la misma señora a unas perdizes que le enbiaron bivas' by an editor, who strips the poem of its ambiguity in labelling the birds as 'perdizes' (partridges).

notion of heteroglossia, which describes how a unitary (dominant or normative) language is actually made up of different types of discourse – these can be those of different social and professional groups, classes, and generations, and include dialectical differences and slang (Dentith 1995: 35). Essentially, Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia explains how within any discourse – whether in one sentence, one individual's speech, or a dialogue between interlocutors – there are different ways of speaking that confront one another and require negotiation.[33]

At one stage Calisto draws attention to the fact that the distance between himself and Melibea is caused by a *linguistic* problem: he has need of an 'intercesor o medianero que suba de mano en mano mi mensaje hasta los oídos de aquella a quien yo segunda vez hablar tengo por imposible' (Rojas 2000: 88-89). But their linguistic disjunction exemplifies a far greater struggle between ideological points of view – what Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez calls 'dialogic conflict between their clashing subjectivities' (2007: 254). As Voloshinov explains in *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, language is a social phenomenon and therefore inherently interwoven with values and ideologies.[34] To use language is to articulate a position: when we speak or write we are articulating a system of beliefs.[35] Even if the same words are used they can generate subject positions that are conflictual and contradictory. Within each instance of heteroglossia there exists a level of conflict or negotiation between social and ideological positions that is manifested on a linguistic level when the

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[33] Brownlee describes dialogism as 'a confrontation of different discourses that inevitably has the effect of questioning the authority of each one.' (1990: 4).

[34] Dentith (1995: 23; citing Voloshinov 1986: 10).

[35] Herrick (2009: 236). See Dentith 'what govern the to and fro of linguistic interaction are the social positions of the speakers, while these social relationships are themselves realized, in part, through language' (1995: 28-29).

meaning of words is contested.[36] This can be seen in one particular instance in Act XIX, when Melibea asks her lover if he would like to take some sustenance, a courtly gesture of hospitality and care: 'Señor mio, ¿quieres que mande a Lucrecia traer alguna colación?' (Rojas 2000: 322). Calisto's response is to appropriate the word 'colación' into his own discourse of carnality:

> No hay otra colación para mi sino tener tu cuerpo y belleza en mi poder. Comer y beber, dondequiera se da por dinero, en cada tiempo se puede haber, y cualquiera lo puede alcanzar. Pero lo no vendible, lo que en toda la tierra no hay igual que en este huerto, ¿cómo mandas que se me pase ningún momento que no goce? (Rojas 2000: 322)

Perhaps in her desire to *formar* Calisto as her own 'perfect' courtier, Melibea tries to remind Calisto that he is better than this:

> Y pues tú, señor, eres el dechado de cortesía y buena criana, ¿cómo mandas a mi lengua hablar y no a tus manos que estén quedas? ¿Por qué no olviidas estas mañas? Mándalas estar sosegadas y dejar su enojoso uso y conversación incomportable. Cata, ángel mío, que así como me es agradable tu vista sosegada, me es enojoso tu riguroso trato. Tus honestas burlas me dan placer, tus deshonestas manos me fatigan quando pasan de la razón. (Rojas 2000: 321)

Note here that it is Calisto's *words* and not his *actions* that Melibea refers to as 'honest'; suggesting that there is no 'hidden' interior self that is 'true' or superior.

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[36] See Dentith (1995: 23-24, 37-38); this is an idea expressed by Voloshinov's concept of the 'multiaccentuality' of words. See also Schuster: 'Language as a dialogic phenomenon is virtually a site of political struggle as each of us "seeks to infuse language with [our] own intentions"' (1998; cited in Herrick 2009: 236).

An interesting anecdote in *Il Cortegiano* demonstrates the important intersections between language, self and community, and serves as an interesting counterpoint for the representation of courtliness in *Celestina*. Federico Fregoso describes how two ladies were tricked by a fellow courtier into believing that a 'un contadin bergamesco' (Castiglione 1981: II, 318) was a visiting Spanish dignitary. The so-called dignitary was so convincing in his appearances, being 'ingeniosissimo, musico, danzatore, ballatore e più accorto cortegiano che fosse in tutta Spagna' (Castiglione 1981: II, 319) that they could not believe he was otherwise and sat down to pursue a protracted and reverent conversation with him, to the mirth of others at court. Ultimately, despite his fine behaviour and clothes he is given away by his uncultured Lombardian speech. Because oratorical skills and linguistic abilities were considered appropriate for a courtly gentleman, these ladies are willing to believe that his unexpected discourse is simply a game since they are told by the courtier who set up the trick that this visiting 'nobleman' has a talent for mimicry. Falvo claims that masquerading no matter how grotesque or distasteful could add charm to one's social image, but only if it simultaneously highlighted inherent nobility and courtliness: 'what counts for the courtier is not so much the disguise but the recognition beneath the disguise and the ironic reversal of its function' (1992: 73). Had he truly been a courtier with a proven record of eloquent discourse the Lombard's show of vulgar speech would have been applauded as a successful game of double-bluff. As it stands, without such courtly linguistic skills his prior fine conduct counts for nothing.

The assumption that these ladies make returns us to the centrality of language for the creation of a courtly identity, reminding us of the statement in

Boscán's translation that 'sin estas quiça todas las otras valdrian harto poco' (1569: fol. 31r). It furthermore provides an inverse portrayal of Calisto and Melibea's relationship and casts new light on the latter's proclamation in Act XIV that she feels taken in by her lover's 'cruel conversation': 'Si pensara que tan desmesuradamente te habías de haber conmigo, no fiara mi persona de tu cruel conuersación' (Rojas 2000: 274). Is it cruel, perhaps, because it led her to believe in the possibility of a *social relationship* that fulfilled its courtly promise? Like the women in *Il Cortegiano* Melibea has been taken in by her interlocutor's speech; unlike the former, however, she believes that speech *is* the person rather than a 'mask' covering a hidden 'true' self. Instead, the juxtaposition of Calisto's mismatched words and actions highlights the inherent duality of the human condition.

Melibea's statement does not, I think, show naivety; she has by now spent enough time in Calisto's company to know he is not the 'perfect' courtly lover. Rather I believe it is more to do with faith in language not only as the site of selfhood and human experience, but also of social cohesion. Instead their discourse is characterized by a constant back-and-forth of misunderstanding; consequently, their respective 'courtly' selves are left half-formed, without answer. Paradoxically, it is only when Calisto is gone and Melibea is left alone that she gains complete control over their discourse and consequently can fashion an emotional connection with him. To witness her speech to her father in Act XX, in which she praises the young nobleman and his status as the 'perfect' courtly lover – 'sus virtudes y bondad a todos eran manifiestas' (Rojas 2000: 333) – we could be forgiven for thinking that theirs had been an equally harmonious and functioning relationship in life.

Great emphasis is placed in *Il Cortegiano* upon language as a means of creating cohesion between individuals. But *Celestina* reveals the absurdity of discourse as a social unifier. The action of the narrative serves as an intertextual commentary on Federico Fregoso's statement in *Il Cortegiano* about the need for a common language in order to bring 'light' – i.e. understanding – to social relationships, without which we are lost: '[V]a tentoni, como che cammina per le tenebre senza lume e però spesso erra la strada'. In *Celestina* it is the marginal characters, particularly Sempronio, who bring this to the fore. Exasperated by Calisto's excessive pawing of Melibea's girdle and his rhetorical flourishes in Act VI, Sempronio remarks 'Que mucho hablando matas a ti y a los que te oyen. Y así que perderás la vida o el seso; cualquiera que falte, basta para quedarte a escuras' (Rojas 2000: 157), highlighting the danger that Calisto will become lost in words and the experiences they engender. Similarly, he later counsels his master: 'Deja, señor esos rodeos, deja esas poesías, que no es habla conveniente la que a todos no es común, la que todos no participan, la que pocos entienden' (Rojas 2000: 198).

Almost as an answering echo to the anxiety displayed by Castiglione (and Nebrija), language is shown in *Celestina* to only bring people together on a temporary basis. Malcolm Read observes that characters actually succeed in systematically isolating themselves, despite their 'cravings for social contact' (1976: 172). Although Melibea alludes to her future with Calisto in the most romantic of terms – 'si pasar quisiere la mar, con él iré; si rodear el mundo, lléveme consigo; si venderme en tierra de enemigos, no rehuiré su querer' (Rojas 2000: 296) – their relationship is not discussed in terms of permanent states. She does not envisage that it will end in marriage, as her comments to Lucrecia after

overhearing her parents' discussion about marriage in Act XVI make plain: 'No piensen en estas vanidades ni en estos casamientos, que más vale ser buena amiga que mala casada' (Rojas 2000: 296).[37] The impermanence of Calisto's courtly self can be glimpsed in a brief but interesting incident in Act I when, prompted by a comment made by Sempronio, he bursts into impromptu laughter in the midst of much discussion of love-sickness.[38] This uncontrolled reaction elicits the exclamation 'Maldito seas, que hecho me has reír, lo que no pensé hogaño' (Rojas 2000: 37). While also revealing his awareness that gratuitous laughter plays no part in a courtly relationship, of particular interest is Calisto's use of the term *hogaño* (*questanno*, in the Italian translation; Rojas 1973: 53) – meaning 'nowadays' or 'in this day and age'; it puts a limit on his 'courtly' behaviour, making it for today, this week, this love affair only.

A Ceaseless Flow of Becoming

This inability to fashion stable, lasting courtly identities and social relationships has been said by some scholars to be due to the 'failure' of language in the *Tragicomedia*. For Read this failure is explained by characters' misuse of language: the formulaic nature with which they use it creates situations of absurd stereotype and mechanical behaviour that leave it 'meaningless and insane' and the 'true senses of words twisted almost beyond recognition' (1978: 174); yet his view does not take into account that courtly discourse is predicated upon such an

[37] Lobera et al note that the young woman who would prefer to be an 'amiga' than 'casada' is a traditional theme in popular lyric, proverbs, and ballads (Rojas 2000: 296, n. 33).

[38] This has been noted by Read (1978: 169).

ability to play with words. Marina Brownlee states that the failure of protagonists to form relationships 'is predicated instead on the impure, transgressive nature of language itself' (1990: 211); but her view is later qualified by the fact that she locates fault in the *context* in which their discourse takes place. She argues that Rojas creates a sense of 'linguistic and social alienation' in *Celestina* by setting the action of the narrative in a contemporary urban environment (Brownlee 1990: 213).

Certainly, the type of linguistic self-fashioning advocated in the pages of *Il Cortegiano* was intended for the exclusive, idealized environment of the court and a socially elite group of interloctuors. It formed part of a delicate and vital game, one with specific aims (bettering oneself, one's position, and one's relationships) and tangible goals (political and social influence, material wealth, and sexual reward).[39] Castiglione's text is clear about imposing boundaries between social groups and the conventional notions of decorum that specified that speech and behaviour were meant to match the context, interlocutor, and subject matter.[40] The 'courtly' self-fashioning performed by characters in *Celestina*, however, does not take place in such a context but in an urban world driven by commercial and material desires involving a merchant's daughter and a member of the minor urban oligarchy, not to mention the appropriation of the discourse of courtly love by their servants. It is, as Mary Malcolm Gaylord has

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[39] See Elias (1982), Jaeger (1985), Weiss (1991), and Weissberger (1998). Likewise Warner (2011) talks of the 'social consequences' of the ideology of the 'dignity of man' and the desire for betterment and nobility.

[40] Decorum is defined as 'la armónica concordancia de todos los elementos que component el discurso o guardan alguna relación con él: la *utilitas* de la causa, los interesados en el discurso (orador, aunto, público), *res et verba*, *verba* con el orador y con el público, las cinco fases de la elaboración entre sí y con el público' (Lausberg 1966-69: vol. I, entry n. 258, p. 233).

shown, an environment where commerce, wealth, exchange, and material betterment are the desired ends, *not* political influence or the attainment of abstract virtues.[41] Calisto, Melibea and Pleberio are described as members of the 'new rich', self-made bourgeoisie class who populated towns, despite references in the narrative to their 'nobility' (Maravall 1964: 48-49).[42] Martin states that Calisto is ill-suited for the role he is trying to play: cut off from the socio-political culture of the court, his day-to-day reality is instead that of 'bourgeois values and virtues'; a world in which he appears far more comfortable (1972: 100). As an ennobled member of the urban oligarchy, however, Calisto's use of courtly language is not in and of itself indecorous, but the way he applies it to inappropriate situations and individuals is shocking and funny; he uses it, for example, to address the old prostitute and *hechicera*, Celestina, to whom he spouts the same conventions and imagery as if he were conversing with a noble lover. Throughout the narrative of *Celestina* the urban street environment is unleashed upon the idealised discourse of the court and the 'Other' that is so often ignored in such works enters the discursive space of courtly self-fashioning. Courtly discourse is used by all servants and prostitutes – Sempronio and Elicia; Pármeno and Areúsa, and by even the stable boy Sosia, who courts Areusa in the most elevated of styles – who engage in what Severin calls 'una parodia cortés doble que desvaloriza aun más' (Severin 1980: 695).

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[41] Maravall was the first to note the proliferation of references to markets and merchant activity particularly in moments of great dramatic intensity (1964: 43).

[42] Allusions are made to the greatness of Calisto's family by Sempronio, who refers to his father as 'magnífico' in Act II – a term associated with nobility (Rojas 2000: 84, n.17). 'Magnificence' was a virtue commonly attributed to the moneyed classes as they assumed aristocratic-like livelihoods and comportment; indeed, the term 'magnífico' became so commonly applied to non-noble individuals such as merchants that an edict was issued by Felipe II to stop its spread (Lapeyre 1955: 161; cited in Maravall 1964: 40).

Like Read, Brownlee is of the opinion that language is unable to fully represent experience due to what she sees as a 'severing of the word from its referent' (1990: 214) – a view that once again places language and world in a binary relationship. I believe that there is another explanation for the intransience of the selves and societies created in *Celestina* than a mere lack of decorum, one that is rooted in the inherent mutability of language itself, and stems from its material and dialogic nature. I contend that language fails to form and transform the world of Calisto and Melibea and to create social cohesion because, to return to Voloshinov's theory, it 'presents the picture of a ceaseless flow of becoming' (Dentith 1995: 109).

The problem of language's mutability was recognised by contemporary writers who sought to fix and contain this ceaseless movement, often described using imagery of birth, growth, and death: 'like plants and men,' states Rebhorn, it 'is born, grows, reaches maturity, and finally is corrupted or decays and dies' (1983: 73). We can discern such a fear of impermanence and transience in Nebrija's *Gramática*, for example. An awareness that language was not a fixed system or a static entity divorced from the flow of history but a thing of permanent mutability and flux also emerges in *Il Cortegiano* (Rebhorn 1983: 70). In describing the history of the Italian languages, for example, Count Ludovico talks of their development in terms of flow and flux, like that of a river (Castiglione 1981: I, 58; 2009: I, 135). As with Rojas's description of the generative nature of language in the prologue to the *Tragicomedia*, Castiglione too uses natural imagery, speaking of words being 'di fiori e di frutti la terra' which are stripped of their life by 'le stagioni dell'anno' and then reborn until, consumed once more, they wither and die. Boscán translates the mention of

'fiori e frutti' as 'unos los árboles pierden la hoja y en los otros echan y llevan fruto' (Castiglione 2009: I, 7, 141), which more directly recalls Rojas's words in the prologue.

In *Celestina* nothing is permanent; one of the overriding motifs of the work is fortune and the passage of time. Severin observes that 'The voices of *Celestina* are human beings in metamorphosis' (1989: 4). It is perhaps somewhat inevitable, then, that Calisto and Melibea's fashioning of self and society is unstable and ephemeral when the very thing that they use is itself so very mutable. As Azar comments that 'No lasting institution is based purely on verbal behaviour' (1984: 39). Any identity fashioned through language alone is shown to be a weak and unstable construction open to distortion. Consequently, anything that is fashioned in and through such an unstable medium has to constantly evolve and re-assert itself, otherwise it risks becoming meaningless. This is why I suggest the figure of the 'mask' or any other associated performative term based upon a binary between appearance and reality, and which presupposes a fixed and fully-formed identity is inappropriate when discussing the way self-hood is formed through and in words. For it presupposes a finished product when selfhood can only ever be a subject position *in formation*. This is what reading *Il Cortegiano* against *Celestina* in all its complexity and ambiguity brings to the fore.

Bakhtin and Voloshinov's theories demonstrate that language exists in a ceaseless flow of meanings in movement. Each engagement with the word is implicated in a process of negotiation between past and present function and significance. Yet because discourse is social, this negotiation takes place not only between a speaker and the history of the word in question, but between

interlocutors. Bakhtin theorizes that 'The word in language is half someone elses' and expropriating the other half of the ownership, submitting it to one's own intentions, is difficult (1981: 293-94). Far from being the harbinger of social unity, as we saw with Calisto and Melibea language is a site of ongoing struggle. Dayle Seidenspinner-Núñez asserts that *Celestina*'s dialogic form is perfect for representing 'the conflictive interaction of "nuestra flaca humanidad"' (2007: 251). Rojas's representation of a 'universe in continual discord' in the paratextual material is played out through the problematic processes of linguistic and textual interpretation represented in the narrative (Seidenspinner-Núñez 2007: 242-44). Calisto and Melibea attempt what Paul Julian Smith has called 'the impossible: the fusion of word and thing, of orator and public in the single moment of representation' (1985: 224) – an attempt that is undermined by the materialist, dialogic nature of language itself, and by the conflict between discourses. Furthermore, I contend that the fluid, conflictive nature of these discursive processes gains an additional level of potency and relevance when we consider the context of *Celestina*'s sixteenth-century reception in Spain and Italy. For the two Peninsulas were undergoing social and political changes that would have profound implications for the way in which selfhood and social relationships were conceived and put into practice – issues that, as discussed in the introduction to this chapter, frequently underlie texts that addressed issues related to language and courtliness.

Courtly Words, Urban World

Celestina is not situated in a court, nor is it 'courtly'; instead it represents the appropriation of courtliness into an urban environment and shows characters using this to fashion self and society in ways that could be termed 'indecorous'. I therefore find it interesting that it was received with such enthusiasm, particularly at a time when different communities – urban, courtly, bourgeoisie, aristocratic – were coming into increasing contact and competition. Christopher Black notes that the boundaries between social groups at this time in Italian society were more fluid than elsewhere in Europe (2001: 129, note 1, 132). And in Spain, the forced conversions of the Jews and Muslims had created a situation of social and cultural fluidity on the one hand, in which there were now different ways to be a 'Christian'. On the other hand, at the same time as new boundaries were being created and policed – *converso*, *marrano* – old ones were being re-negotiated and re-constituted. Economic and political change had brought the different social groups into competition: the professional class of notaries, merchants, and lawyers, some of whom had, like Pleberio, earned enough money to buy themselves into the nobility, now competed with the aristocracy for influence. New ideas about nobility based upon the virtue of one's deeds and a diminished importance of lineage were being vocalised.[43] This left the nobility open to colonisation by different classes. Pina Rosa Piras remarks that betweeen 1507, when *Il Cortegiano* was set, and 1534, when Boscán translated it

> la figura sociale del Cortegiano si andava modificando in base ai processi di cambiamento che maturavano in quei decenni. Una di questi era rapresentato dalla problematica della riforma che,

[43] For example, Diego de Valera's 1441 work *Espejo de verdadera nobleza*; on which see Rodríguez-Velasco (2009: 132; and 1996).

> non ancora irrigidita dall'ortodossia, lasciava larghi spazi alla politica culturale dei vari centri europei. (1999: 107)

In terms of political power, social influence, culture, and economic activity it is hard, Black argues, to see clear divisions between the nobility and professional and commercial middle classes (2001: 130, 131). With power fragmented under different centres in Italy, often revolving around a wealthy republican family or cardinal rather than a monarchical ruler, courtliness was no longer only the concern of the aristocracy. David Burnley (1998: 219) and Norbert Elias (1982: 304-05) both maintain that the growth of a class of wealthy, educated and often influential but non-noble urban individuals who mixed with the aristocracy led to a 'democratization' of elite ideals and conduct, which became aspirations and were modified to suit the demands of urban, commercial society.

Texts like *Il Cortegiano* were initially intended for noble or 'courtly' audiences. Indeed, Garcilaso's introduction to *El Cortesano* highlights its importance for 'hombres y damas principales' in order to 'hacer, no solamente todas las que en aquella su manera de vivir acrecientan el punto y el valor de las personas, mas aun de guardarse de todas las que pueden abaxalle' (Castiglione 2009: 80). Reyes Cano states that *Il Cortegiano* was 'fervientemente leído en círculos aristocráticos y literarios de los principales países europeos' (Castiglione 2009: 57). In contrast, Peter Burke observes that *Il Cortegiano*'s professed intentions (to describe the characteristics of the perfect courtier as a model for real courtiers) are paradoxical: not only does it profess to teach 'what cannot be learned', but those

> expected to read the dialogue, the well-born ladies- and gentlemen-in-waiting at courts, are supposed not to need it. The book appears to inform those already in the know. (1995: 32)

Burke interprets this disjunction as evidence that *Il Cortegiano*'s actual intention was entertainment and that contemporary printers clearly saw potential in a non-courtly market.

While I would not wholly agree that the overriding function of the work was one of entertainment, for reasons I will address below, we can discern in Boscán's translation, at least, an acknowledgement of the changed circumstances in which *El Cortesano* was likely read. While in Book One of the Italian original, Count Ludovico refers to courtiers as 'professionals' – 'diversi omini di tal *professione*' (Castiglione 1981: I, 126) – in *El Cortesano*, Boscán instead glosses this as 'hombres diestros de estas tales habilidades' (Castiglione 2009: I, 125). As a result the Castillian translation removes courtly self-fashioning from the defined socio-political context of the original, emphasising instead only the abilities required and not the necessity of the surrounding environment. By actively *not* associating courtliness so closely with a particular profession and social role Boscán's translation acknowledges the fluidity of boundaries in sixteenth-century Spain, perhaps appealing to Spanish audiences based outside of the court. Similarly, with regards to the *Tragicomedia*, Augustus Pallotta suggests that *Celestina*'s readers included the sort of people portrayed by Castiglione's text: nobles, learned scholars and men of the merchant class who

> represented the values of a new age. But [who] also believed in the preservation of a well-defined, stratified social order with sufficient mobility to reward individual achievement. (1991: 28)

Ordóñez's translation, as stated, was done for and at the behest of a noblewoman of the court of Urbino; yet in reality *Celestina*, like *Il Cortegiano*, was read by a larger range of people than 'hombres y damas principales'.

In the sixteenth century books like *Il Cortegiano* and *Celestina* were produced in such a way that meant they were increasingly available to a wider social range of people, enabling the spread of hitherto elite ideals, customs, and language.[44] Decisions taken by printers over how books were marketed both acknowledged and encouraged this development. In Italy, pioneered by Aldo Manuzio and later Gabriele Giolito di Ferrari, books were printed in ways that made them more affordable: they were smaller in size (most often *octavo*), which meant that they were portable, and printed on cheaper paper with smaller margins using italic script, which enabled more text to be fitted on the page (Hirsch 174: 70-71; Pallota 1991: 27).[45] Typographical changes introduced by Pietro Bembo earlier in the century (the use of apostrophes, capital letters, paragraphs to isolate elements of the text, e.g. quotations, periods, semi-colons, commas as separation marks, italic typeface) had made books easier to read and more aesthetically pleasing; suggesting they were not only aimed at the humanistically-trained solitary reader in university, monastic cell, or court but at laymen and women (Binotti 2007: 324). These modifications enabled these

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[44] See Hirsch, who suggests that the spread of vernacular texts engaged a 'new class of readers' (1974: 132).

[45] 'Special features' meant extra expenses: illustrations and woodcuts, printing in red ink, the use of two or more typefaces, or in marginalia. To lower costs (of producing different scenes and images) the same image may be replicated throughout the text at different places; copies were taken of the woodcuts of other printers (by tracing the image – saving having to get an illustrator to design a new one); or purchased blocks or plates used previously by other printers were employed (Hirsch 1974: 48-49).

books to be read 'sin maestro'; in other words without formal guidance or training.[46]

It furthermore becomes clear from bibliographic evidence that *Il Cortegiano* came to be viewed as a kind of handbook or guide fairly quickly after it was first printed.[47] We see this in the addition of indexes and marginal annotations from around 1539, mentioned above; these reduce the open-ended arguments into hard and fast 'dos' and 'don'ts' and advocate archetypal standards and general rules to which readers could aspire. Such additional paratextual features changed the way readers interacted with books, allowing them to browse or pick and choose a topic from the index or *tavola* as habit or mood dictated.[48] Binotti writes that the editorial success of such texts indicates that although they

> may have originally been addressed to a rarified readership preeminently preoccupied with the cultivation of courtly ideals and behaviors, they quickly attracted a much more heterogeneous public composed not only of noblemen intent on discovering the emblems of a longed-for world which was swiftly waning, but also of a bourgeois audience who found in these texts the elements of a behavioral code that could improve their status. (2012: 85-86)

Indeed, characters like Calisto and Melibea and their families were exactly the sort of individuals who would typically have bought works like *Il Cortegiano* and used them as handbooks – something that Maravall acknowledges: 'adoptan

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[46] This statement was made by the writer Cristóbal de Villalón in 1539; cited in McPheeters (1961: 192).

[47] Noted by Reyes Cano (2009: 57).

[48] Burke (1995: 43-45) describes the development of *Il Cortegiano*'s form throughout the sixteenth century.

formas de vida de los nobles, y que, al proceder de esa manera, provocan en esas formas sociales nobiliarias graves transformaciones' (1964: 41). Melibea and Calisto can therefore be seen as providing a meta-fictional account of the way in which manuals on courtliness were used.

John Martin's statement that 'self-fashioning was an aspect of the lives of townspeople as well as those of courtiers' (1997: 1326) is borne out not only by the representation in *Celestina*, but by historical evidence. Calisto is not the only urban individual to have taken advantage of courtly language in an attempt to fashion himself into the image of legitimate courtly lover whose carnal desires and less than noble intentions could be 'sugar-coated' in religious and devotional language. Angus Mackay's diverting article 'Courtly Love and Lust in Loja' (1989) provides an interesting historical comparison of the way in which courtly ideas were used and abused in an urban context. In 1509 court proceedings were heard in the town of Loja on the sexual affairs of some of the inhabitants, where a series of wife-swapping and homosexual liaisons were reported to have ocurred, leading to a violent incident. The events detailed in a legal *información* show that conventions of courtly discourse were clearly being used by individuals to fulfil rather less courtly desires. The adulterous love for another man's wife is described in terms associated with love-sickness ('mal de amores' – the men of the town fall ill with love repeatedly), service ('le avia rogado diziendo que quisiese servirse de el e ser su amiga' and 'el deseo que el tenia de servirla'), suffering ('por la pasión de Dios' is used by several men), and death ('se moría por ella') (Mackay 1989: 86-88). What is most interesting is that the individuals involved in the incidents included *licenciados, regidores, corregidores, alcaldes*, and their respectable *doñas*, as well as a *vicario*, an *abad*, and the nephew of

a bishop. Much emphasis is placed upon their 'honra' and they are referred to as 'caballeros'. The fact that their affairs survive in a legal document suggests that these attempts to create 'courtly' liaisons through discourse were at least partly unsuccessful and led not to smooth social cohesion and noble affairs but chaos and violence.

Calisto and Melibea could have been interpreted as individuals trying to adhere to the conventions and discourses advised in works such as *Il Cortegiano*. They may well have provided an amusing example of how *not* to go about fashioning a 'courtly' identity for oneself, showing instead, like the inhabitants of Loja, how courtly self-fashioning could go wrong, and thus supplementing the advice of Castiglione's text. Yet as we saw, courtly discourse is subject to critique in *Celestina*, despite being used by all levels of society; this suggests that away from the exclusive environment of the court such language is impotent. Once in the realm of the street Calisto's courtly language loses what Bourdieu terms 'capital' – its credibility and authority (1991: 8, 14). By placing courtly discourse in an urban, 'near-picareque' world (Martin 1972: 110) Rojas highlights its absurdity, its spuriousness, and ultimately its futility in the creation of social cohesion, even between two people that are members of the group with which it is associated.

Furthermore, when read through the lens of the unsubstantial and finite courtly identities on show in *Celestina*, the 'perfect courtier' of *Il Cortegiano* can also be seen in a new light – coming away from the encounter as an unattainable if not absurd being. Indeed, characters in *Il Cortegiano* themselves acknowledge that the perfect being who is conjured up purely by his own eloquence and that of the debate's interlocutors exists under constant pressure of slippage and

disintegration. This is directly alluded to at the end of Book Two, when Magnifico Giuliano expresses doubt that such a being could ever exist, stating: 'con la eloquenzia sua hanno formato un cortegiano che mai non fu né forse po essere' (1981: II, 339) ['con la abundancia de su buen hablar, han formado un Cortesano tal que podemos decir que nunca fue ni puede ser quizá' (2009: II, 283)]. Boscán's use of the term *abundancia* for *eloquenzia* makes the link with the power of speech even more strongly. The discrepancy between Calisto's fine words and wandering hands unravels the courtly identity depicted in Castiglione's text and questions the idea that simply through speech a person could embody certain qualities and conduct.

Rojas gets to the heart of the way language operates in a social world and provides a critical perspective on the origins and aims of courtliness as a way of bringing people together and creating self and society out of words. I contend that in the context of its sixteenth-century reception, *Celestina*'s representation of and engagement with language and the discourse of courtliness becomes more nuanced than scholarship has previously acknowledged. While Rojas is undoubtedly formed by rhetorical traditions what characters do with these conventions is actually more complex; the narrative of *Celestina* demonstrates a far more materialist conception of the power that language has to form and transform self and society. Rojas's work acts as an intertextual interlocutor with Castiglione's concept of 'formar con parole'. Yet it does not resoundingly qualify the aspirations and ideals that *Il Cortegiano* expresses. Rather, it tests the humanist conception that language is a civilising force and furthermore questions its ability to create lasting, stable selves and societies. Self-fashioning is shown to be a collective process in *Celestina* but one that is ultimately flawed. Because language

exists in a 'ceaseless flow of becoming', the formation and transformation of self and society is problematized and defined not by harmony and order but by 'contienda' and 'lid'.

4. Libertà and Lengua: The Symbolic Function of the Prostitute

Centres and Margins

Marcel Détienne contends that 'To discover the complete horizon of a society's symbolic values, it is also necessary to map out the transgressions of its deviants' (1979: ix).[49] The importance of the margins has been addressed by cultural and literary theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin, who theorises the relationship between the central or dominant culture and the marginal through the concept of the carnivalesque. For Bakhtin, carnival is exterior and separate; it exists in 'an entirely different sphere' to 'official culture' (Bakhtin 1984: 7). In their critique of Bakhtin, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White acknowledge the usefulness of carnival as a method of critical analysis but go beyond what they see as his 'troublesome *folkloric* approach', showing instead that 'structural features of carnival operate far beyond the strict confines of popular festivity and are intrinsic to the dialectics of social classification' (Stallybrass and White 1986: 26; emphasis authors' own).[50] Their concept of the relationship between centre and margins emphasises *interplay* rather than separateness. Noting that each forms an implicit, if often unwanted part of the other that cannot be

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[49] Cited in Stallybrass and White (1986: 19-20).

[50] Stallybrass and White discuss weaknesses in Bakhtin's theory, and other critical reactions to it (1986: 13-15, 19). Criticisms they propose are its nostalgia, uncritical populism – carnival oftens abuses and demonises weaker elements in society: women, ethnic and religious minorities, those who 'don't belong' – failure to do away with the dominant ideology, and its licensed complicity (1986: 19).

disentangled, their work highlights the symbolic significance of the socially peripheral, the largely silent 'other' against which the central or dominant culture constructs its self-image:

> A recurrent pattern emerges: the 'top' attempts to reject and eliminate the 'bottom' for reasons of prestige and status, only to discover, not only that it is frequently dependent upon that low-Other [...], but also that the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary eroticized constituent of its own fantasy life. The result is a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level. It is for this reason that what is socially peripheral is so frequently symbolically central. (Stallybrass and White 1986: 4-5)

Celestina's sixteenth-century popularity is due in part to its portrayal of life on the margins filled with unsalubrious characters that are both feared and desired. The work's *incipit*, with its moralising tone, encapsulates one of the key issues of Stallybrass and White's theory – the relationship between centres and margins:

> Síguese la Comedia o Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, compuesta en reprehensión de los locos enamorados que, vencidos de su desordenado apetito, a sus amigas llaman y dicen ser su dios. Asimismo hecho en aviso de los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos y lisonjeros sirvientes. (Rojas 2000: 23)

While the *incipit* suggests that the margins need to be vilified and contained, the narrative itself presents them in a far more ambiguous light, as a 'primary eroticized constituent' of the centre's 'own fantasy life', to use Stallybrass and White's terminology. It is only through reading the narrative of *Celestina* that the

interplay between the two becomes apparent and we see just how far the work plays out the complexity of social and cultural relationships.

Celestina may 'map out the transgressions of its deviants', to borrow Détienne's phrase, but the result is far from straightforward or unproblematic. It reveals that centre and margin exist in a dialectic; ideologies and conventions from the former are appropriated by the margins in a process that subjects them to questioning and critique. Bakhtin's notion of carnival, a temporary 'world upside down' in which the margins invert, mock, and test official dogma and practices, theorises this point.[51] So, too, do Stallybrass and White, who argue that 'History seen from above and history seen from below are irreducibly different and they consequently impose radically different perspectives on the question of hierarchy' (1986: 4). This chapter replicates the function that *Celestina* itself performs as an intertextual 'aparte' on the macro-level in the supra-national dialogue of which it is part through the symbolic figure of the Prostitute. I contend that this perspective from the peripheries opens up a productive space for assessing the concept of the human condition, in the process allowing new meanings to emerge.

Quite a substantial amount of work has been done on non-elite groups in the Middle Ages and Renaissance and the non-individualised nature of their

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[51] Fothergill-Payne proposes a Bakhtinian reading of *Celestina*, remarking that the work represents 'that "other life" in the world of letters, a world to which Bakhtin refers when he reminds us that, in parallel with serious cults of religion and scholarship, there existed in medieval society a whole "world upside down" that parodied the same divinities so venerated in everyday life' (1993: 32). See also Ladero Quesada, who notes that the underclass in *Celestina* acts as 'una suerte de frontera interna en la sociedad urbana, que se teme, se controla, se condena, pero también se utiliza' (1990: 119).

representation when they are addressed.[52] Since Joan Kelly-Gadol asked 'Did Women Have a Renaissance?' in 1987 scholars have taken an interest in 'Renaissance' as a category that can be questioned from different perspectives. Subsequent socio-historical studies have rejected the reification of the perspective of the elites (ecclesiastical, secular, normally male) and instead sought to reclaim the historical viewpoint of the 'Other' (religious and racial minorities, women, witches, peasants and prostitutes, in addition to the old, aging and physically deformed), seeking their experiences and values in historical and textual documentation, and foregrounding the intersections between centre and margins. Walter Mignolo (1995), for example, approaches the cultural and social developments of the Renaissance through the colonisation of the New World. Focusing in particular on the interweaving of language and power, he highlights how the European conventions, ideologies, and identities in this period were constructed via the exploitation and oppression of other cultures. More recently, James S. Amelang approaches the question of whether the lower classes had a Renaissance through the experiences of 'men and women working in the fields, or laboring in the shops lining the streets of Renaissance cities' (2008: 243).

As we will see with *Celestina*, the peripheries of society exemplifiy the mixture of desire and repulsion that Stallybrass and White discuss. A space where even the most respectable might go 'when necessity demanded' or when

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[52] Di Stefano argues that 'las clases bajas de la sociedad sólo se constituyen tema de la literatura en los momentos en que principian a dejar de ser bajas, o en los de crisis social, en que comienzan a formar parte de la capa cultural dirigente' (Di Stefano 1966: 21). According to Duby, this lack of attention reflects a tendency 'to denigrate anyone not belonging to the dominant class, i.e. the high nobility and its underlings, the knights' and to treat the lower orders as a 'homogeneous mass in which making distinctions would have been unwarranted (1980: 262). Amelang also notes that in Renaissance Europe the 'popular classes [...] were much discussed by their betters', but that the lower classes were relegated to a single, amorphous category (2008: 243).

desire struck to 'live dangerously', to cite Barbara Hanawalt (2007: 2), and to do what could not be done openly in mainstream society – whether it be engaging in the tittilation of sexual or criminal acts (Hanawalt 2007: 2) – the margins epitomised the darker side to Man's nature, enslaved to base impulses of greed, lust, and violence. However, the importance of the periphery goes beyond the socio-historical use it served as a literal place of escapism and titillation; it also had a figurative purpose. The representation of non-elite groups in the Middle Ages and Renaissance may not do justice to their historical heterogeneity, but it does demonstrate the symbolic importance of the socially peripheral.[53] If we look at medieval and Renaissance art and literature, for example, we will see that the marginal Other not only figures frequently, it is acknowledged to be necessary for the very definition and construction of the centre – as exemplified by Michael Camille in *Image on the Edge* (1992). In his discussion of self-fashioning, Greenblatt also acknowledges that this process is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile – a threatening Other that must be discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed (1980: 9). This is recognised in *Il Cortegiano*, which displays awareness that the fashioning and experience of a particular subjectivity, such as the idealised 'perfetto cortegiano', takes place in opposition to other, imperfect groups in society. Castiglione acknowledges that the issue can be perceived from a perspective other than that of the noble *male*, devoting a chapter to exploring the idea of courtliness as it pertained to women. *Celestina*, too, implicitly recognises this need for other viewpoints, and demonstrates how the fashioning of the 'courtly' self is bound up in and defined by interactions with individuals on the periphery.

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[53] This has also been noted by Freedman (1999: 4, 8) in his work on medieval peasants.

J. A. W. Bennett (1982) and David Aers (1992) rightly argue that the 'discovery of the individual' did not suddenly spring forth at the end of the Middle Ages; nevertheless the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries are marked by an expansion of the scope and focus of the debate beyond the boundaries of elite groups in society. Artwork from this period reveals a fascination with the old, infirm, and physically imperfect in addition to the courtly and elegant. Leonardo da Vinci's drawings, 'Caricature of the Head of an Old Man' (ca. 1507) or 'Study of Five Grotesque Heads' (1494), acknowledge the breadth of the human condition, as well as providing a humorous caricature, as do paintings by Lucas Cranach ('The Courtesan and the Old Man', 'The Old Fool', ca. 1530) and Quintin Massys ('A Grotesque Old Woman', 1513). In his study of the 'El villano digno' in early modern drama, Noël Salomon (1985) gives examples of dramatic works in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in which human dignity is not simply portrayed as exclusive to the upper classes.[54] His analyses show that depictions of the marginal could be heterogeneous and individualised.

This is clearly also exemplified by *Celestina*, whose representation of life from multiple viewpoints, including nobles and merchants, servants, go-betweens, sorceresses and prostitutes, recognises the variety of the human

[54] See Salomon (1985: 623-761, particularly pp. 674-705). He nevertheless acknowledges that this representation nonetheless constitutes an exception to the norm whereby 'lo más corriente es que la dignidad sea privilegio exclusivo de la clase noble y sea denegada a los villanos' (1985: 703-704).

condition.[55] Marginal groups are brought centre stage as protagonists in literature and art in the sixteenth century. Though not demonstrative of its entire print tradition, a visual reminder of this can be seen in the titlepages of some editions of *Celestina*, which feature the eponymous old bawd in a more prominent position (see Appendix 1, figs. 9-11). And with the emergence of *picaresque* literature, we find more attention being paid to non-noble characters. Servants, prostitutes, gypsies, and peasants all feature as primary protagonists in works such as Francisco Delicado's *La Lozana andaluza* (1534), *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554) or *El Crotalón* by Cristóbal de Villalón (c. 1556), as well as *Celestina*'s continuations.[56] Clearly, then, the peripheries of society held considerable fascination.

The symbolic significance of the margins has been suggested by a number of scholars who trace how certain groups – women (Chojnacki 2000; Bock 2002; Weiss 2002; Mazo Karras 2003; Warner 2011), Jews (Moore 2006; Nirenberg 1996), lepers (Woodbridge 2008), peasants (Freedman 1999), and prostitutes (Nirenberg 1996; Hsu 2002; Perry 1978) – constituted a figure of thought and means of expression in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. My approach in this final chapter builds upon their various investigations into the symbolic function

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[55] Baranda argues that Rojas has created 'una comedia o tragicomedia urbana y olvida en ella por completo al grueso de los grupos ciudadanos, a quienes realmente formaban el entremado urbano y le daban sentido de tal'; artisans, small business owners, crafts and tradesmen, unskilled workers and labourers are on occasion mentioned, but they in no way form part of the detail of the narrative's events (2003b: 14-15). Yet Baranda overstates the importance of the work as a historically accurate representation of the world in which it was created. Were Rojas to include a member of every different social group *Celestina* would quickly lose narratorial focus.

[56] Vian Herrero (2003: 330-331) links *Celestina*'s success at this time to the growth of the *picaresque* genre. See Hsu on the courtesan in early modern Spanish literature (2002) and Horodowich on writers in Renaissance Italy who feature courtesans as primary protagonists or interlocutors (2008: 166).

of the margins, but focuses exclusively on the prostitute. I contend that she exemplifies what Stallybrass and White call 'the primary site of contradiction, the site of conflicting desires and mutually incompatible representation' (1986: 4), being both reviled and desired, and consistently represented with marked ambivalence. The object of much ideological and socio-political categorisation and control, the prostitute is, like other marginal groups in medieval and Renaissance society, commonly demonised and not often given a voice or individuality beyond frequently negative or pejorative labels such as 'mala muger'. Though she symbolises a cross-roads at which various issues intersect, I focus on only two select concerns: on human agency balanced between freedom and constraint, and on the symbolic link between corrupting women and corrupting books.

The first section of the chapter looks at the notion of agency and the limitations upon human freedom and reads the *Tragicomedia* against Pietro Aretino's *Vita delle puttane*. Framed by imagery of 'contienda' and 'lid' – the bellicose movements of the cosmos, the warring in nature, within man's nature, and between humans of all ages – *Celestina* depicts a world in which individuals struggle to define themselves and their place in society. As we saw in the previous chapter, characters' fashioning of self and society has to be negotiated not only against and in conjunction with other individuals, but against linguistic instability. They frequently express observations about their sense of agency and potential to enact change in themselves and the world around them – witness the exhortations to the perceived power of Fortune, for example, which Ayllón comments 'surge como una fuerza que refleja la lucha del hombre consigo mismo y con el universo' (1965: 73). *Celestina* nevertheless reveals how human

agency is determined by other factors than the moral – an idea disseminated in the Renaissance by writers like Pico della Mirandola and Marsilio Ficino. They believed that, gifted by God's grace, man had the ability to make of himself what he wished, and was limited only by his own decisions and moral choices.[57] It is not my intention to approach the concept of agency through the lens of abstract forces, but rather to look at more prosaic and worldly determinants. *Celestina* engages with ideologies and conventions that reduce the complexity of life to schemes, abstractions, and ideals; it is, as I have previously stated, an example of philosophy 'in action' – in other words, it asks what happens when these ideologies and conventions are applied to situations with competing material desires and constraints. As a figure whose agency rests on the fact that she gives herself away, the prostitute is particularly useful for thinking about the tensions inherent in the idea of human agency, and by extension the relationship between self and society. In reading Rojas and Aretino together, we will see how the portrayal of the prostitute highlights the important and very real material elements that determined the human condition, agency, and the nature of excellence in the early modern period.

In the second section I will show how the prostitute became a symbolic figure in Renaissance Spain and Italy through which anxieties about language and profane literature are examined. Focusing on the translation of Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* into Spanish by Fernán Xuárez as the *Coloquio de las damas*, it reads this translation as a textual attempt to control the ambiguity and supposed freedom of these women, whose speech was viewed as a corrupting and poisonous influence. In Xuárez's *Coloquio* the 'honesty' of women, specifically prostitutes, is

[57] On the ambiguity in moral choice see Murchland (1966: vi).

connected with the 'honesty' of textual representation; woman and text being the symbolic sites of a moral battleground. This concluding section then brings us full circle back to the issues with which we opened the study: namely the problems and possibilities of creation, reception, and interpretation.

Part One: The Paradox of the Prostitute

I find it interesting that *Celestina*, which gives such a prominent voice to prostitutes, was successful in places where prostitution not only flourished but was a vital part of both economy and culture. In Spain, attitudes may not have reached the level of tolerance of the Italian city-states and republics, but the business nevertheless had an acknowledged role in society, albeit as a 'necessary evil'.[58] This term is itself a paradoxical variant of Stallybrass and White's idea of 'a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire'.

Although Venice was an important centre for the printing and distribution of many different types of books across Europe, there is something nonetheless symbolically fitting about *Celestina* being published predominantly here in Renaissance Italy (as the list of editions in Appendix 2. shows). The courtesans of this city made prostitution into an art form, attracting the economic and cultural capital of national and overseas visitors; there were said to be thousands more less prestigious women involved in the businesss, who worked on the

[58] For the historical situation of prostitution in Spain and Italy, see Perry (1978), Bullough (1982), Brundage (1987), Lacarra (1990; 1992; 1993), Cohen (1991), Ruggiero (1993), Richards (1994), and Fernández Álvarez (2002).

streets or in private and public brothels.[59] A complex and ambiguous figure, in sixteenth-century Venice the courtesan was said to symbolise 'the Venetian myth of social freedom' (M. Rosenthal 1992: 19) – a paradox that Rojas's Areúsa enacts, as we will see. The association between courtesans and liberty made here is not an isolated occurrence. Indeed, a look at the terminology used in late medieval and Renaissance texts to represent both courtesans and prostitutes demonstrates this. Among labels such as 'mala muger' and 'ramera' as well as the obvious 'puta', 'meretrix', 'prostituta' or 'cortesana', we also find references to women's marital status as a means of designating their moral character.

An example of this can be found in a text from the period I study that was printed in both Spain and Italy: the *Diálogo de mujeres* by Cristóbal de Castillejo (1544), a discussion between two male interlocutors, one representing the figure of the misogynist, and the other a defender of women. Castillejo is useful because he highlights the intersections between the discourse on freedom and the discourse on prostitutes. In some respects a rather conventional discussion of feminine vices and virtues, the *Diálogo* sets out to expose the character of women in different social positions by addressing the usual categories of *Casada*, *Viuda*, *Monja*, as well as *Doncella*. And yet, interestingly, Castillejo also includes two marginal groups in his otherwise conventional typologies – the *Soltera* and *Alcahueta*. Furthermore, he links the category of *Soltera*, which was often used in a pejorative sense in the sixteenth century, to others that functioned as synonyms for 'prostitute': *cortesana*, *cantonera*, *ramera*, *costurera* (1986: ll. 2466-2479). Derived from the Latin *solitarius*, 'soltero' is

[59] In Venice, estimated numbers vary but were said to reach more than 10,000, a reasonable percentage of the population. See Chojnacka (1999: 224-225, n. 31), and M. Rosenthal (1992: 11, n. 2).

defined by Covarrubias as 'los mozos que no son casados', yet 'soltura', he explains, 'algunas veces vale atrevimiento y libertad' (2006: 1448).[60] This link is also found in another word commonly used to designate both single women and prostitutes – 'suelta', which is derived from the Latin *solūtus* and has a sense of independence and a lack of moral restraint.[61] These definitions are ideologically significant, because they link the social condition of women that are single to moral views of female sexuality and, more importantly for this study, agency.[62] A woman without a man to control her was perceived as dangerous (Chojnacka 1999: 217); without the influence of family (be it husband, father, or brother) or institution (e.g. a convent) to tame her, she was 'suelta' or 'la que no está atada' – in today's speech, a 'loose woman' (Reyes Cano 1986: 36-37). Not only this, these definitionss also reveal the associations between the condition of women and that most vital defining aspect of the human condition and man's inherent dignity: free will. It is therefore unsurprising if paradoxical that the symbolic figure of the prostitute is used in both *La vita delle puttane* and *Celestina* to address issues of freedom and choice.

Transcending Limitations

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[60] See also Nebrija's *Diccionario Latino-Español* (1979).

[61] *DRAE*: 'Libre, atrevido y poco sujeto' and 'Que no está casado'; Lewis and Short's translation of 'solutus' defines it as '*Free* from the rule of others, *uncontrolled*, *independent*', '*Free* from moral restraint; hence, *unbridled*, *insolent*, *loose*', among other meanings (1879; my emphasis).

[62] On the conflation of singlewomen and prostitute see Mazo Karras (1999: 127, 128, 134).

Pietro Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* is the third day of the Italian author's *Ragionamento* (1534), which explores different categories of women – Nun, Wife, Whore – circulated independently both in Italian and Castilian. Although Aretino's book exposes the sexually voracious wiles of women, its significance goes beyond that of erotic depictions to the realm of social and political critique. Not all scholars have approached *La vita delle puttane* in this way. It has been interpreted as a kind of book of etiquette on prostitution (Moravia 2005: vii) or an 'especie de Biblia satánica del placer carnal' (López Barbadillo 1917: xviii). Vian Herrero argues that it deals with 'la actividad más irracional, instintiva y alejada de la reflexión, la actividad sexual' (2003: 341-342). While I agree that it places sex, an irrational impulse, within a framework reserved for the pursuit of rational debate, I contend that sex itself is not the focal point of the dialogue. In this I take my cues from Margaret Rosenthal (1992) and Ruth Mazo Karras (1999). In their respective work on prostitutes and courtesans they contend that we need to understand the figure of the prostitute in medieval and Renaissance literature socially and intellectually rather than simply through the limiting lens of sexual activity. Following this strand of argument, Ian Moulton states that while 'porno-graphos' (which he glosses as 'whore-writing'), Aretino's dialogues as a whole are not *pornographic*; i.e. their aim is not to arouse (2000: 128). In fact, of the three days of discussion, despite its focus on prostitutes *La vita delle puttane* is probably the least explicit and is concerned far less with sex.

Moulton's interpretation of Aretino's dialogues provides a key critical focus point for my own approach. He argues that Aretino's discourses can be differentiated from other erotic works by their

> representation of female sexual agency, their questioning of established gender categories, their awareness of class conflict, and their obvious embeddedness in political and social commentary. (Moulton 2000: 128)

Although at times a scandalous portrait of prostitutes as well as the servants and ruffians that surround them, the *La vita delle puttane* clearly has other concerns at its heart. Indeed, according to Moulton, the *Ragionamenti* as a whole 'constitute one of the most remarkable documents on the status of women produced in sixteenth-century Europe' and, although profoundly ambivalent about women's moral status, they nonetheless they offer 'a scathing indictment of the social options facing women in early modern Italy' (2000: 131). As we will see, the issue of freedom lies at the heart of *La vita delle puttane* and *Celestina*; both texts explore the tensions in human agency between liberty and the constraints that determine it.

After comparing the conditions of Nun, Wife, and Whore, Nanna and Antonia agree that the former's daughter, Pippa, should become a prostitute. One of the principal reasons for doing so is the material benefits brought by the office. Prostitution is presented in *La vita delle puttane* as a locus of feminine freedom and as an opportunity for economic gain and advancement, as well as pleasure. Antonia states in her conclusion that:

> è bella cosa a essere chimata signora stando continuamente in feste e in nozze, come tu stessa, che hai detto tanto di loro, sai

> molto meglio di me. E importa il cavarsi ogni vogliuzza, potendo favorire ciascuno. (Gagliardi 2011: 153)[63]

The freedom that Nanna and Antonia portray is founded upon having the economic means and stability to do what they want; as Moulton points out, they are (almost) always business: what is of most concern to the interlocutors of *La vita delle puttane* is material gain and security – 'the *economics* of sex rather than the metaphysics of love' (Moulton 2000: 130; my emphasis). Prostitutes are depicted as active agents in the construction of their own lives and subjectivities; in *La vita delle puttane* they run businesses, own property, and amass fortunes; they answer to no man but in fact frequently turn the tables on them in their quest for material gain (Moulton 2000: 132). Not once does Nanna describe herself as being prevented by her office as a prostitute from doing anything she would wish; instead she clearly wields power and influence in the Roman neighbourhood where she lives, dealing with all social levels from courtiers and ambassadors to merchants and soldiers with aplomb and without fear of repercussion.

The portrayal of Celestina by Rojas is, in certain respects, similar. Pármeno's description in Act I of his time with her, in which he details the influence she holds over the town, is meant as a warning to his master; it paints a picture of a woman with social power and influence. Celestina's own bouts of nostalgia and remembrance, particularly in Act IX, provide us with a glimpse of her past success, the lavish feasts, presents and tributes brought in homage by all sectors of society, the house full of girls to do her bidding. Severin argues that it

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[63] I cite both Aretino and Xuárez via the bilingual edition of *La vita della puttane* and the *Coloquio de las damas* edited by Gagliardi (2011). For another modern edition of Aretino see the edition by Bàrbieri Squarotti (1988) and for an earlier edition of the *Coloquio* see that by López Barbadillo (1917).

is the eponymous bawd's various offices, and particularly her engagement in prostitution, that empower her (1993: 23). Like Nanna, she presides over what Moulton calls an 'anti-court, where women ruled and men were hopeful suitors' or an '"anti-home," a domestic space in which domestic values such as thrift, sobriety, and fidelity were mocked and negated' (2000: 495). Moulton's comment about *La vita delle puttane* is useful, but it needs qualifying in relation to *Celestina*: as we will see the idea of the 'home' is vitally important to characters in Rojas's work and interwoven with his portrayal of agency. Celestina's brothel does represent a clear 'anti-home' or 'anti-court' of sorts; but its function is not only to mock and negate. It conceptualises feelings of nostalgia and stability and represents not only a desire for place, but a place of agency. Finally, it is a reminder that selfhood is relational and that desire for agency is balanced by a need for structure.

Turning gender hierarchies on their head Celestina becomes 'the lord of misrule in her own town' (Severin 1993: 18). This sentiment is exemplified also by Nanna in *La vita* when she claims that 'Le meretrice non son donne, ma sono meretrice' (Gagliardi 2011: 99). So unique is the condition of prostitutes that Nanna proclaims their independence from the feminine gender. Margaret Rosenthal interprets Nanna's statement as a demonstration of the whore's ability 'to create a new symbolic order that is different from that of other women' (2005: xix). Her ability to transcend the limitations of her gender by becoming sexually liberated, socially free, and economically independent is also noted by Moulton, who remarks that Nanna and Antonia's decision suggests that 'being a courtesan offers a woman a way to transcend some of the social limitations placed on her by her gender' (2000: 131, 132). This reading turns the

prostitute's condition as 'other' and inferior into a positive one of potential transformation in line with the Platonic viewpoint of Pico and Ficino, among others, who believed that man possessed the liberty to exist outside of the cosmological hierarchy and the power to realise his desires. In Xuárez's *Coloquio de las damas*, however, the newly christened Lucrecia remarks instead that 'Las rameras no son mugeres, *sino diablos*' (Gagliardi 2011: 98; my emphasis). While the Italian *meretrice* denotes a prostitute but does not impart any further obvious moral judgement about the nature of these women, the Castillian *diablos* does.[64] In the new context of Xuárez's translation (which I discuss in greater detail in the second part to this chapter), an alternative perspective comes to light: here their 'otherness' is not representative of the positive possibility of transformation but rather suggests that by their actions and nature prostitutes become not simply less than *female*, but even less than human.[65]

Being the complex ambiguous texts that they are, the portrayals of agency through prostitution in *Celestina* and *La vita delle puttane* are by no means straightforward. Moulton remarks that Aretino s

> repeatedly foregrounds the power relations that structure the social world its characters inhabit. Nanna is well aware that if

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[64] The *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* defines *meretrice* as 'Femmina, che fa copia del suo corpo altrui per mercede. Lat. *meretrix*'; whereas *puttana* –'femmina, che, per mercede, fa copia disonestamente altrui del suo corpo, che men disonestamente diciamo, meretrice, femmina di Mondo, mondana. Lat. *meretrix, scortum*' – does include a judgement: 'dishonesty'.

[65] In his 1575 dialogue against courtesans, the *Oratione contra le cortigiana*, Sperone Speroni depicts courtesans as merciless, proud creatures, employing animal imagery to describe them: they are serpents, half-beast, half-devil – a stark contrast to his earlier dialogue *Dialogo d'amore*, 1542, which featured Tullia D'Aragona as an interlocutor and gave a positive representation (Malpezzi Price 2003: 74). These two works are another demonstration of the dialectic between loathing and desire that characterises centre and margins, and which is explored through the figure of the prostitute.

> she has in some fashion managed to transcend the common lot of women, she is very much in the minority, and her position is precarious. (2000: 134)

The tension inherent in the moral choices by which the human condition was supposedly determined affected all levels of society, men and women. However, *La vita delle puttane* and *Celestina* give us a particularly gendered perspective on the limitations of human agency. If on the one hand the two works present us with deceitful, dangerous women capable of inciting the worst sort of social degradation and moral chaos (and enjoy doing so), they also do not shy away from exposing the other side to this world, a side in which the women themselves are jeopardised and damaged. Alan Deyermond has commented on the association between gender and economic status; noting that it is probably not insignificant that the only non-noble household that Rojas describes is a female one, he remarks that 'we should not overlook the link between women and low economic status' (Deyermond 1993: 9). Through the female households they depict, *La vita delle puttane* and *Celestina* demonstrate how as women, and economically impoverished at that, prostitutes are trapped by circumstances. Far from free agents, they are determined by poverty, hunger, economic instability, and an uncertain future.

Although Aretino exposes the wiles and tricks of whores with apparent unfettered joy, he too reveals their vulnerability and explores how their apparent freedom to act with impunity is constrained by economic factors.[66] This is something that direct comparison with the *Tragicomedia* may well have brought out even further; foregrounding new and alternative nuances in the interplay

[66] See Moulton (2000: 131, 132).

between the two texts. We see glimpses of the darker side to this profession and the prostitutes' foibles and worries. It is they who are shown to suffer as a result of prostitution: Nanna has robbed, lied, swindled, and murdered because of it; Antonia's body bears the boils and scars from syphilis; both have witnessed the violence that goes hand in hand with this work, Nanna noting that the prostitutes-turned-beggers are often the most physically scarred – 'marcate dalla bolla, con che san Giobbe segna el suo segno in sul viso, e anco da qualche fregetto fattogli da quelli che perdeno la pacienzia nei tradimenti loro' (Gagliardi 2011: 49).[67] These physical deformaties, normally associated with moral corruption, as is common with Celestina's scar, are here transformed into the marks of their sacrifice for the greater good.[68]

Despite the expurgations and amendments he enacts upon *La vita delle puttane*, flashes of the original sympathy that Aretino appears to have shown these women appear in Xuárez's translation. See, for example, the passage on a whore's vices and sins, where the Spanish translator expands the discussion of the prositute's greatest sin, which is not *luxuria* but *avaritia*. Here Xuárez adds a description of Lucrecia's dreams about what she will do with the money she has earned, that ends with her evident frustration upon waking and being forced to confront the reality of her situation (Gagliardi 2011: 86-91):

> Ansí que, hermana, cata aquí como haziendo estas consideraciones, no se puede tener cuenta con el pecado de la

[67] See R. Rosenthal (2005: 378). This sentence is part of a passage that Xuárez does not translate, more than likely because of its comparison between the stages of a prostitute's life and the church.

[68] On Celestina's scar see González Echevarría (1993: 5) and more recently Gerli (2011b: 43-45).

> luxuria; y no solamente en esto perdía el tiempo, pero aun en otros mayores desvaríos. (Gagliardi 2011: 88)

Praising this modification as 'un inserto brillante e vivace', Gagliardi comments that 'si dimostra fine psicologo nell'adottare il punto di vista di una sgualdrina, e nel rappresentare in modo credibile le sue speranze, la sua civetteria, il suo disincanto' (2011: xxvii).[69] For all his trepidation over the more obscene material (which I discuss in the next section) it is worth noting that Xuárez does not exclude aspects of the work that portray its characters in a sympathetic light. He may re-frame the work to suit his aims, yet he does not transform Lucrecia and Antonia into wholly unsympathetic monsters.

The economic instability of her work is frequently addressed by Celestina, who refers to her vulnerability frequently throughout the narrative, as can be seen with Pármeno in Act I and Melibea in Act IV, and in the speech she makes in Act IX. Beginning 'Mundo es, passe, ante su rueda, rodee sus alcaduzes…' (Rojas 2000: 214; 1973: 161-162) she runs through a series of proverbs no doubt designed to have an emotional impact upon her listening public. Though she frequently uses her vulnerability as a rhetorical device in her persuasions of others I would argue that Celestina's complaints do express genuine frustration and anxiety if not fear. The fact that these emotions are manifested in moments of solitary truth in the soliloquies at the beginning of Acts IV and VI (like those discussed in Chapter Two, for example) gives her complaints elsewhere a genuine appearance of realism. Her situation is also acknowledged by other characters. In Act III in conversation with Sempronio Celestina justifies her work as a

[69] Xuárez's addition of the frustrated dream of wealth is a common folkloric motif seen elsewhere in wisdom literature such as *El Conde Lucanor* in the tale of the Don Yllán and the Deán de Santiago, who awakens from a life of success to realise it has all been an illusion.

prostitute, go-between, and the grusome role of 'costurera' – the latter two related to the business of prostitution – and demands to know how else she can survive:

> ¿Habíame de mantener del viento? ¿Heredé otra herencia? ¿Tengo otra casa o viña? ¿Conóscesme otra hacienda más deste oficio de que como y bevo, de que visto y calzo? (Rojas 2000: 99)

This is underscored by a later conversation between Sempronio and Pármeno in Act IX, which draws attention to the economic factors determining a person's freedom. Sempronio's comment that Celestina in effect lives off her words and his incredulity that it is the 'diablos' that 'le mostró tanta ruyndad' leads Pármeno to respond that poverty and necessity have made Celestina what she is: 'La necesidad y pobreza, la hambre, que no hay mejor maestra en el mundo, no hay mejor despertadora y avivadora de ingenios' (Rojas 2000: 203).

As in *Celestina*, *La vita delle puttane*'s portrayal of life on the margins of Roman society also shows necessity as a driving factor.[70] The greed that characterises the women in *La vita delle puttane*, and which Xuárez's translation emphasises even more, is turned on its head and offered as an explanation for their actions. The whore turns everything to her advantage – 'ogni cosa fa per una meretrice' (Gagliardi 2011: 49) – because the realities of life for a prostitute once she is no longer desirable mean that she must. All of the tricks and stunts that Nanna reveals point to a woman who is required to do all she can to survive, the life of a prostitute, even a higher-class courtesan, being surprisingly short and

[70] Aretino's world 'is motivated by necessity, as in the Spanish novels with rogues for heroes. Food, clothing, money, possessions – survival, in a word – are the important things' (Moravia 2005: ix).

more often than not ending badly.[71] To return to Nanna's comment that 'Le meretrice non son donne, ma sono meretrice' (Gagliardi 2011: 99), this statement could also signify that whores are not women because they have to be able to go beyond what was considered feminine in order to be able to prosper and survive in this harsh world. The economic constraints under which they live are, ironically, a creative impulse that engenders activity if not agency. We can see this in Pármeno's comment about Celestina's lack of 'herencia', which suggests that while need and lack limit a person's freedom, they can also conversely be a generative factor that forces a person to think and act creatively and independently.

Antonia and Nanna's discussions of the vulnerability of the whore's life force them to confront the likely reality of their old age and infirmity:

> e però pensano e fanno ciò ch'io feci e dissi. Ma dove lascio una nostra saviezza che staria bene alle formiche che si preveggono la state per il verno? Antonia mia, sorella cara, tu hai da sapere che una meretrice sempre ha nel core un pungolo che la fa star malcontenta: questo è il dubitare de quelle scale e di quelle candele che tu sabiamente dicesti, e ti confesso che per una Nanna che si sapia porre dei campe al sole, ce ne sono mille che si muoiono nello spedale. (Gagliardi 2011: 99)

For this reason they are driven to take control of circumstances by doing all that they can. Their precarious situation is generative in another sense, since it leads to the creation of a 'family' and the engendering of future generations of prostitutes who will provide for the aging whore. If they do not have children naturally, they steal them from hospital:

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[71] See M. Rosenthal (1992: 85-87) on the hardship and impoverishment even a famed courtesan could encounter.

> E che fa il pungolo che elle hanno anche nella anima, non pure nel core? Le fa pensare alla vecchiezza, onde se ne vanno agli spedali, e scelta la piú bella bambina che ivi veggano, se la allevano per figliuola e la tolgono di una età che a punto fiorisce nello sfiorire della loro. (Gagliardi 2011: 101)

Deyermond addresses this matrilinear succession in *Celestina*, tracing it back through Celestina to Pármeno's mother Claudina and Elicia's grandmother, and forward to Elicia and Areúsa who, it is supposed, will in turn find their own heirs (1993: 18). At the height of her power 'madre' Celestina held court in an 'anti-home': a brothel-school populated by young women between the ages of fourteen and eighteen. Celestina's boasts about this 'golden era' in Act IX confirm Pármeno's earlier warnings to Calisto in Act I, where he describes how she would persuade the town's women to prostitute themselves with the promise that she could repair their loss: 'A éstos vendía ella aquella sangre innocente de las cuitadillas, la qual ligeramente aventuraban en esfuerzo de la restitución que ella les prometía' (Rojas 2000: 55).

While becoming a prostitute could provide women with a way to live independently and make money, the agency this life provided wass finite and paradoxical. Recalling again Stallybrass and White's idea of the 'eroticized constitutent' in the relationship between centre and margins, prostitutes use their sexuality to exploit the desires of the centre in order to earn the money that will provide them with autonomy; but in doing so they are simultaneously constrained by this, objectified, and divested of their own subjectivity. This situation is also self-perpetuating and constitutes a type of trap or vicious circle: it forces women to create prostitutes of their daughters so as to have someone to look after them.

Despite their cunning and wealth, many prostitutes fell into iniquity, often at the height of their working lives. In *Celestina*, the eponymous go-between's comments in Act IX about Fortune display awareness of the inevitability that her wealth and influence will wane.[72] The necessity of independence and planning for her old age is something Celestina tries to instil in the lazy, pleasure-focused Elicia, the one remaining girl in her brothel, whom she warns in Act VII that without a skill will be 'hecha bestia sin oficio ni renta' (Rojas 2000: 184). Putting her head firmly in the sand, Elicia's attitude, however, is one of unconcern for her old age: 'Gocemos y holguemos, que la vejez pocos la veen, y de los que la veen ninguno murió de hambre' (Rojas 2000: 185). Elicia's statement is another example of the way in which central discourse and ideologies – here the idea of *carpe diem* – are appropriated and reconstituted by lower-status characters in *Celestina*. Nanna is similarly aware of the possible future that awaits her and her fellow whores who, when they are no longer able to trade on their body's desirability due to physical infirmities (age- or disease-related), begin to look for other options:

> E con tante loro astuzie, appena si difendano dal vendere le candele, e spesso il mal francioso fa le vendetta dei mali arrivati. Et è pur bello a vedere una che non potendo piú appiatare sotto al belletto, ad acque forti, a sbiacamenti, a belle vesti e a gran ventagli la sua vecchiezza, fatta denari di collane, di annelli, di robbe di seta, di scuffiotti e di tutte le alter sue pompe, comnicia

[72] See Rojas (2000: 215-215; 1973: 161-162).

> a pigliare i Quattro ordini, come i fanciulli che vogliono essere preti. (Gagliardi 2011: 49)[73]

Aretino continues this lament in the following vein:

> Con alloggiare la turba, trasmutato i suoi ornamenti in letti, puoi fallite delle locande, diventano da pistola, cioè ruffiane, puoi da vangelo col darsi a lavar panni, poi càntono la messa a San Rocco, al Popolo, in su le scale di San Pietro, alla Pace, a Santo Ioanni, e alla Consolazione. (Gagliardi 2011: 49)

Couched in irreverence though it is, Aretino's point is nonetheless a serious one: even a prostitute at the top of her profession is liable to be reduced to tavern-keeper, procuress ('ruffiane'), washerwoman, and finally beggar – each step representing a marked degradation in social and economic status. According to Gagliardi, Aretino's references to the various Roman churches in this passage 'era recorso ad un'altra metafora per rappresentare una tale degradazione economica e sociale' – an analogy that 'aveva voluto parodiare la "progressione che ciascun chierico era tenuto a percorrere, comprendente al di sopra del grado infimo della prima tonsura e al di sotto del grado supremo dell'episcopato"' (2011: xx; citing Forno 1988: 143). Xuárez, however, does not translate the irreverant metaphor 'inspirata ai diversi momenti del rito della santa messa' (Gagliardi 2011: xx)

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[73] Again, Xuárez removes references to the religious orders, and though other modifications are made, the sentiments are similar: 'Y con todo esto, no podemos escaper de no ir a ser lumbrarias, y cáusalo el mal francés de los que en mal hora vienen acá con él. Pero, al fin, las que en la moçedad no se saben governor, no les faltará a la vejes un espital o hazer afeites para el rostro, blanduras para las manos, quitar cejas, hazer colchones, o tomar una venta, o andar estaciones por otras' (Gagliardi 2011: 48). In the commentary to his translation López Barbadillo remarks that 'vendere le candele' refers to the categories of prostitutes that were applied according to their 'quality' – 'cortesana a putana', 'cortesana da lume o da candela' and 'cortesana honesta': 'honestas, honradas […] se titulaba entonces a las que hoy llamaríamos *cocottes*, a la galliparlesca, o gachís de postín, hablando chabacanamente a la española!' (1917: 161) – i.e. those who had perhaps reached a certain level of success or renown in the profession.

contained in this section, possibly to remove any blasphemous comparisons between prostitution and clergy, and thereby the acknowledged truth that prostitutes were as necessary to the health of society as was the salvation of souls.

Reading *La vita delle puttane* through the lens of *Celestina* may well have provided Renaissance audiences with an even more nuanced perspective of life on the margins for women than that portrayed by the satrical commentary of the Italian work alone, and certainly its Spanish translation, as we shall see. *Celestina* shows in a more explicit manner the complexity of freedom and constraint; unlike Aretino's characters, Rojas acknowledges sthe limitations upon their agency. Both authors prevent their interlocutors from becoming wholly diabolical caricatures, but I would suggest that Rojas's portrayal of marginal characters tempers the often blasé representation of Nanna and Antonia. *La vita delle puttane* proposes that prostitution was a valid choice for women; but, unlike the *Tragicomedia*, it pays little heed to the socio-economic context that made such a 'choice' necessary, instead returning to the common opinion that women who become whores must already possess the character and desire to do so: 'perché io non sarei stata meretrice non avendo voglie di meretrice' (Gagliardi 2011: 103).

Aretino posits the possibility that prostitutes could bypass the hierarchies that determined what women could and could *not* do, in doing so becoming more than or other than 'woman', and entering a classification of their own. Yet even this very otherness points to the complexity of the issue of determination.[74] A concept with an interwoven, dual significance, it signifies on the one hand the

[74] For a discussion of the duality of meaning of the term 'determine' in English, see Williams (1977: 83-89).

setting of boundaries or limits and on the other, the pressures that work against these constraints. 'To be determined' can mean to be limited by the constraints and boundaries imposed both by an external power or force and one's own character, as well as evoking a sense of will and purpose.[75] The term applies to both a passive object and an active subject – a duality that is exemplified by the characters Rojas portrays. Nanna's statement about the prostitute being 'other' suggests that in order to gain agency she effectively has to give away her self-hood and subjectivity. Nanna does not see herself as being subject to the wills of others; she is of the opinion that prostitution provides her with liberation from the social hierarchies that held women back. Yet, despite her freedom being founded, or so the discourse suggests, upon economic autonomy, this is conversely also the one constraint by which Nanna admits she is constrained: 'una meretrice che non ha animo se non al denaio non conosce né obligo, né disobligo' (Gagliardi 2011: 43).[76] If the limitation at the forefront of Aretino's mind was economic, a limitation that Rojas is also fully aware of, as can be seen in his treatment of Celestina, I contend that a further perspective on human agency and Aretino's treatment of it can be found in the portrayal of Areúsa. If prostitution in Aretino's text represents freedom *to do* something then an alternative view is explored in *Celestina* through Areúsa, namely the freedom *from* something – which, in her case, is oppression and exploitation.

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[75] See Williams (1977: 87).

[76] The Spanish translation of this phrase removes the direct reference to money, interestingly, glossing it instead as: 'una ramera, que no tiene su fin puesto sino en lo que le han de dar, ni sabe quándo está obligada, ni quándo lo dexa de estar' (Gagliardi 2011: 42).

Determined To/Determined By

Throughout the narrative of *Celestina* the issues of agency and freedom are a latent concern of Areúsa, who makes a similar argument for prostitution as a form of independence. Out of all marginal characters Areúsa demonstrates the most intense desire to strive for independence and define who she is on her own terms. She is classified by critics as a clandestine prostitute; Deyermond notes that her desire for independence means that she chooses to work in this manner rather than for a public *mancebía* or privately-run bordello such as Celestina's (1993: 16). Mazo Karras comments that clandestine prostitutes are where the line gets blurred between categories; this term could designate women who were full time professionals, occasional prostitutes, or simply heterosexually active singlewomen with no commercial involvement (1999: 132), much as we find in Castillejo's *Diálogo* – thus blurring the lines between the centre and margins and highlighting the interplay between the two.

With several exceptions, very little consideration has been given to the way in which Areúsa as a prostitute articulates the tension between agency and the limitations that constrain human freedom. Maravall contends that the marginal characters are driven by an intense 'voluntad individualista' and invokes Areúsa in particular as the voice of class consciousness and social change (1964: 113-114), seeing in her the awakening of an egotistical, bourgeoisie character that pushes her 'a querer librarse de su servicio, no como clase social, claro está, pero sí, por lo menos, personalmente' (1964: 119-120).[77] Yet I would suggest that Areúsa's engagement with the issue of agency is rather more existential in nature than

[77] Gerli (2011b: 155) similarly comments on the individualised portrayal of the prostitutes.

Maravall envisages. Fothergill-Payne and Lida de Malkiel also note the drive towards self-empowerment in Areúsa's discourse. According to Lida de Malkiel, Rojas characterises Areusa 'como personaje que teóricamente más se complace en el libre ejercicio de su voluntad' (1962: 671); and Fothergill-Payne comments that 'Areúsa's impassioned speech against servitude is as much a Stoic confirmation of self-control and freedom as an accusation against the powers that be' (1993: 39). While Fothergill-Payne focuses upon the Senecan elements in Rojas's work, my own approach builds upon this binary between self-control and freedom that the scholar observes.

There are several key scenes for assessing Areúsa's character: her encounter with Pármeno in Acts VII and briefly at the start of Act VIII, the banquet scene of Act IX, and her scenes with Elicia and Centurio after Celestina's death.[78] When we first meet Areúsa in Act VII it is in her own home, where she lives alone but for her 'amigo', a soldier gone to war. From the beginning Areúsa appears conscious of the significance of space and place.[79] We later find out from Celestina that her house is well-furnished and clean, suggesting a pride in and care for her surroundings. Furthermore, her first words are to decry the imposition of an approaching visitor: '¿Quién anda ahí? ¿Quién sube a tal hora en mi cámara?' (Rojas 2000: 173), and at the end of her encounter with Pármeno she desires that the outside world once again be shut out, maintaining boundaries between her space and the exterior through the closing of her front door, telling him: 'Ve con Dios; junta tras ti la puerta' (Rojas 2000:

[78] Morros Mestres traces her representation as a prostitute from the *Comedia* through the changes and interpolations of the *Tragicomedia* (2010).

[79] For scholarship on space and place in *Celestina* see Gilman (1955) and more recently Gerli (1997).

188). Her visitor in Act VII is Celestina, come to play go-between once again, this time between Areúsa and Pármeno. The young woman's initial response to Celestina's persuasions is caution. She presents herself as an honest(ish) woman who is linked with only one man, with whom she has a relationship that goes beyond the merely commercial. Describing him as her 'amigo' – the terminology used in documents to describe common-law unions (Morros Mestres 2010: 361) – she remarks that 'me da todo lo que he menester; tiéneme honrada; favoréceme y trátame como si fuese su señora' (Rojas 2000: 177). The arrival of Celestina causes her to wonder whether '¿Había de hacerle ruindad?' (Rojas 2000: 176). Taking pride in her 'respectable' status, she is keen not to be associated with prostitution and differentiates herself from Celestina and Elicia, her cousin, who sells her body clandestinely to anyone who will and can pay, exclaiming to Pármeno that 'no soy de aquellas que piensas, no soy de las que públicamente están a vender sus cuerpos por dinero' (Rojas 2000: 182).[80]

Crucially, however, Areúsa does not appear at ease in her home. She is clearly on edge: anxious that her space will be brought into disrepute and fearful of her neighbours. She worries that the comings and goings of Celestina and Pármeno will alert them to clandestine activities and that they will tell her 'amigo' of her infidelity out of jealousy, stating that 'tengo a quien dar cuenta, como has oído, y si soy sentida, matarme ha. Tengo vecinas embidiosas; luego lo dirán' (Rojas 2000: 178).[81] Her use of the phrase 'dar cuenta a alguien' alerts us to the fact that her independence is precarious and constrained by circumstantial

[80] With these words Rojas 'intenta dejar claro que su personaje no trabaja en un burdel municipal, pero sí que se dedica a un oficio del que pretende desmarcarse no sólo con sus palabras sino con la actitud de reclamar una mayor intimidad para los dos' (Morros Mestres 2010: 367). See also Lobera et al's commentary (Rojas 2000: 182, n. 158).

[81] See Rank (1972: 231; cited in Hathaway 1994: 62).

factors. She is also physically unwell and suffering from the 'mal de la madre' or 'wandering womb'.[82] A commonly known complaint in the Middle Ages, the only cure for the 'mal de la madre' was believed to be sexual intercourse and childbirth. Celestina informs Areúsa that 'mientra no parieres, nunca te faltará este mal que agora, de lo cual él debe ser causa. Y si no crees en dolor, cree en color, y verás lo que viene de su sola compañía' (Rojas 2000: 177). As in her persuasions of other characters one of the old bawd's lines of argument here is the danger brought by isolating oneself from others. Celestina gets to the heart of one of the work's key preoccupations yet again, namely the issue of the relationship between the individual and the social order. It is no coincidence that Areúsa's ailment is associated with the figure of the 'madre' – a symbol of human interaction and authority. However, rather than a symbol for 'the failure of affirmative maternal functions' or the literal 'mal' of Celestina, as James F. Burke proposes (1993: 4), I read the 'mal de la madre' as representative of Areúsa's yearning for a symbolic home. The cure that Celestina proposes – sexual intercourse and motherhood – is of course associated with regeneration; as we will see, the young woman functions in the narrative as a symbol for this process. Celestina's words and the night spent with Pármento evidently have a reaction in Areúsa, for the next time we meet her she has left the solitude and autonomy of her house to join the other servants and whores in Celestina's brothel for a banquet.

Act IX's banquet represents a pseudo-platonic feast at which aspects of human society and behaviour are discussed by Celestina, the two pairs of lovers,

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[82] See Burke (1993: 111-112) on the classical origins of the 'mal de la madre' and Dangler (2001: 92-94) on *Celestina*'s use of them.

Elicia and Sempronio and Areúsa and Páremeno, and the serving girl Lucrecia. In Bakhtin's theory of carnival the feast is of central importance; representing an important primary form of human culture that goes beyond mere physical or psychological rest, it had instead 'an essential, meaningful philosophical content' (Bakhtin 1984: 8-9) – an additional spiritual and ideological dimension without which the notion of festivity itself becomes meaningless. For Bakhtin argues that it 'must be sanctioned not by the world of practical conditions but by the highest aims of human existence, that is, by the world of ideals' (1984: 8-9). Beyond the focus on the lower strata (food, drink, sex, the corporal) that Fothergill-Payne notes in her Bakhtinian reading of *Celestina* (1993: 37-38), another central tenet of the carnivalesque feast is its representation of change, renewal, and the process of becoming. Areúsa's speech in this scene demonstrates how the marginal characters' constant re-evaluation of the world brings to the fore alternative perspectives. In this case, the process of becoming is linked explicitly to the limitations on human agency.

In Act IX, Areúsa gives a passionate and angry diatribe against inequality, social hierarchy, and exploitation; the issues of agency and freedom lie at the heart of her conceptualisation of self-hood.[83] Her commentary reveals an awareness of the limitations imposed by society on the individual, above all women of low social (and moral) standing, as evidenced by her statement that 'Nunca alegre vivirás si por voluntad de muchos te riges' (Rojas 2000: 207).[84] A

[83] Swietlicki (1985: 5), in her overview of the female characters in the work and assessment of Rojas's text as 'feminist', highlights the unprecedented significance of championing liberty through the figures of Areúsa and Elicia.

[84] Areúsa's angry tirade about liberty is reflected in a comment made with rather more cynical effect by Sempronio in the same scene in order to placate an irate Elicia: 'Calla, mi senora, mi vida, mis amores, que quien a otro sirve no es libre. Así que sojeción me relieva de culpa' (Rojas 2000: 203).

symbolic figure used to explore issues of agency, Areúsa herself explores this tension between freedom and constraint within the narrative using the figure of the domestic servant, who is characterised by a lack of identity, voice and autonomy. These women are deprived of the sort of human experiences that engender self-hood: love, conversation, and freedom of movement: 'éstas que sirven a señoras', she cries, 'ni gozan deleite ni conocen los dulces premios de amor. Nunca tratan con parientas, con iguales a quien puedan hablar tú por tú' (Rojas 2000: 212). Areúsa's comments underline the fact that subjectivity, as we saw in Chapter Three, is relational: humans are social creatures that are determined by their interactions with others. Marginalised from such interactions and subjected to the control of others, she argues, their experience of subjectivity is passive – *determined by* externally imposed limitations.

Areúsa implicitly recognises the interplay between centres and margins when she notes that, despite the social function they perform, servants are paradoxically exiled from the social domain of relationships. Necessary but marginalised, these women are further de-humanised by the moral arguments against them. Female servants are, according to Areúsa, treated as if they were amoral, promiscuous, and dangerous influences upon a 'reputable' household: accused of sleeping with members of the family or other servants and of stealing they are stripped and thrown out into the street – '¡Allá irás, ladrona, puta; no destruirás mi casa y honra' (Rojas 2000: 213). The language Areúsa uses to talk about the experiences of marginal women is that of exile: not only are they exiled from human interactions and excluded from moral discourse, they are literally expelled from the homes of their mistresses. This process continues with their isolation from language itself, the means by which self-fashioning takes

place.[85] Denied proper names they are referred to by whatever insults their mistresses use: *ladrona, puta, tiñosa, bellaca, golosa, puerca, suzia, necia, desaliñada, mala muger* (Rojas 2000: 213). They 'own' no name of their own, freely chosen; in contrast their whole existential experience is tied to that of their master or mistress and determined for them. It is against this denial of self that Areúsa fights, actively seeking control over her own life:

> ¡Oh tía, y qué duro nombre y qué grave y soberbio es "Señora" contino en la boca! *Por esto me vivo sobre mí desde que me sé conocer*. Que jamás me precié de *llamarme de otrie sino mía*, mayormente destas señoras que agora se usan. (Rojas 2000: 212; my emphasis)

Since her initial scene in Act VII, after her encounter with Celestina and Pármeno, Areúsa appears to have undergone an awakening. Enclosed in her own space, the anxiety of exile from other people and from self-definition is what fuels this outburst. Like Melibea and Pleberio, discussed in Chapter Two in relation to the idea of 'Nosce te ipsum', Areúsa experiences a moment of self-knowledge, and comes to realise that only deep awareness of herself and her experiences can bring freedom and autonomy.[86] Because 'me sé conocer', she declares, she is able to define who she is on her own terms. As a woman of low birth with no family connections, no wealth and, we can assume, little education,

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[85] Gerli, too, has noted the link between speech and subjectivity (2011b: 160-161), particularly with regards to Melibea (2011b: 150-152) and Areúsa (2011b: 154-156) – two women who burst forth from 'profoundly reconfigured literary scenarios of courtliness and misogyny' (2011b: 154).

[86] See Gerli (2011b: 156), who writes that Areúsa and Melibea 'both insist on their possession of a degree of self-knowledge that grants them the freedom to speak and to persue their desires'. The second part of this chapter looks in more detail at the prostitute's speech and how it was feared as a potent power able to determine – and corrupt – society.

Areúsa seeks self-hood from the only thing attainable and available to her: her own actions and body. This is made clear in her comment that

> Ruin sea quien por ruin se tiene; las obras hacen linaje, que al fin todos somos hijos de Adam y Eva. Procure de ser cada uno bueno por sí, y no vaya a buscar en la nobleza de sus pasados la virtud. (Rojas 2000: 208)

Her statement resists the established order. It is a rebellion that does not only come from economic pressure, but from what Freedman, in his work on the textual representation of peasants in the Middle Ages, calls 'a cultural change: a change in which a social environment is no longer taken for granted but rather perceived as intolerable' (1999: 286). And yet, as in elsewhere in *Celestina*, Areúsa enacts this resistance by appropriating the discourse of the established order (here, debates about virtue and nobility) – using their language to empower herself from the margins.

Her words furthermore echo contemporary definitions of and debates about nobility that Jesús Rodríguez-Velasco has shown were being addressed in later medieval Iberia (1996; 2009). These debates continued into the early modern period. According to scholars such as Stanley Chojnacki and John Jeffries Martin, sixteenth-century attitudes towards self-hood were characterised by a new emphasis on words and deeds rather than lineage. Chojnacki maintains that the way in which individuals in Renaissance Europe

> responded to the structural conditions of their ascribed identities and participated in the relationships associated with them were as important to the forging of personhood as the

> rules and expectations that cultural norms and authoritative institutions laid down for those roles. (2000: 23)

Likewise Martin claims that an individual's social role could be 'less significant than the particular role he or she *assumed*' (2002: 214; my emphasis). Their work highlights the importance of agency in the creation of self-hood. Areúsa's approach to subjectivity embodies the idea that how a person *chooses* to represent who they know themselves to be is fundamental. She presents herself as someone who has fashioned herself autonomously, rather than according to literary conventions or material possessions, as do her social superiors Calisto, Melibea, and Pleberio. Rejecting the existential exile of domestic service, she turns to a way of life that she believes grants her freedom from exploitation and ultimately freedom to represent herself as she wishes. As with Nanna's decision to make her daughter into a courtesan, Areúsa represents the world of prostitution as the locus of female autonomy.

Act IX's banquet scene depicts Areúsa's attempts to rationalise her decisions and behaviour, a technique common to all characters in *Celestina*, regardless of status. She demonstrates the same mental process of trying to make sense of the world and her place in it as Melibea, Calisto, and Pleberio. The *Tragicomedia*'s portrayal here represents a case-study of one individual's fight to reclaim themselves; but the process it outlines is ambiguous and problematic. E. R. Berndt remarks that 'Existe siempre en *La Celestina* el gran conflicto entre lo que el hombre quiere personalmente y lo que la sociedad le impone' (1963: 107). Throughout the narrative of the *Tragicomedia* Areúsa explores and exemplifies the interplay between centre and margins and between self and society.

As in *La vita delle puttane*, Areúsa's decision to live independently and as a clandestine prostitute is presented unproblematically by her as *her own choice*: 'Por esto, madre,' she says, 'he querido más vivir en mi pequeña casa, *esenta y señora*, que no en sus ricos palacios, sojuzgada y cativa' (Rojas 2000: 213; my emphasis). The term 'esenta' encompasses the idea of being exempt *from* something as well as having freedom and independence.[87] She believes that autonomy will liberate her from domination and exploitation by others: her 'pequeña casa' may be a limited sphere of influence, but it allows her to be her own 'señora'. Freedman remarks that 'Freedom was understood not as a release from all bonds to others but as immunity from the arbitrary will of another' (1999: 240). Areúsa's desire for a domain of her own also aligns with the representation of space and place in Aretino's *La vita delle puttane*, where Nanna dominates her domestic space like the ruler of a fiefdom – extracting taxes and tithes from her clients and other businesses alike. Like Celestina's house Areúsa's 'pequeña casa' can be seen as what Severin calls (in relation to the eponymous old bawd) 'a symbol of the misrule of a woman empowered by her illegal professions' (1993: 23). Maravall contends that Areúsa's desire to be mistress of her own home displays 'el nuevo espíritu individualista y burgués', and reflects the historical situation of a growing middle class, in whom there had awoken a desire for personal autonomy and dominion (1964: 120-121). I would reject this approach and suggest a broader, more existential ideological interpretation: Areúsa's desire for freedom is not about class but about the fundamental status of what it means to be human. As Gerli notes, prostitution for Areúsa is not a means to wealth but rather 'the

[87] *DRAE*: 'exento' comes from the Latin 'exemptus' and signifies among other things, to be 'Libre, desembarazado de algo. Exento de cuidados, de temor' and 'Aislado, independiente'.

recovery of a place of sanctuary and repose for the plebeian subject, an activity whose end affords the acquisition of a sense of autonomy, privacy, and personal space' (1997: 69).

A different perspective on Areúsa's status as the ruler of her own home can furthermore be seen if we consider the Italian translation, particularly in light of Berndt's earlier statement about conflict: 'Per questo, matre mia, ho volsuto piu presto vivere in mia piccola casa, *absente e patrona*, che in loro gran palazzi subjugata e captiva' (Rojas 1973: 161; my emphasis). Ordóñez's translation of 'esenta' as 'absente' may well be an error, but it unwittingly symbolises Areúsa's predicament. She is both patron of her agency and simultaneously defined by its very absence; the space that she fights to inhabit, conceptualised as her 'pequeña casa', is never wholly hers. Though Areúsa and the other prostitutes fashion themselves as 'desiring, empowered speakers' who 'are never subservient, impotent, silent, or passive players' (Gerli 2011b: 154), their desire is for naught, since they are unable to bring to fruition the yearnings they articulate (Gerli 2011b: 161-162). There is a palpable tension between the commodification of the self that is the prostitute's work and Areúsa's desire for agency, self-hood and experiences that make a human being – love, desire, community. Yet as Nanna declares, 'è impossiblile che chi si sottomette a ognuno ami niuno' (Gagliardi 2011: 55).

Areúsa's passionate declaration of autonomy and equality posits a desire for renewal and change that is reinforced by its symbolic location within the home and the feast, which in Bakhtin's theory of carnival represents 'temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order; [...] the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions' (Bakhtin

1984: 10).[88] Yet, while Areúsa may strive to live in her own autonomously created world, ultimately she depends upon the very social structures against which she struggles. As a single woman, she has no socially acceptable place in society.[89] Gerda Lerner in *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness*, comments that 'until the nineteenth century the choice of remaining single was only a choice of one kind of dependency over another'; celibacy and a religious life meant dependency on one's superiors and the male clergy; celibacy and a secular life meant dependency on male members of the family; domestic service entailed dependency on a household of strangers and humiliation (Lerner 1993: 120). And if she chose prostitution a woman 'could hardly be considered independent, since her very existence depended on the "protection" and sanction of various authorities' (Lerner 1993: 120), not to mention on remaining desirable for her clients, invariably male. As a prostitute Areúsa relies upon the patronage of members of the dominant central group in society for her living.[90] Despite the power that Nanna asserts, her dependence upon this larger macrosociety is also evident. As we discussed above, Aretino does not shy away from depicting the grim reality of the life of a prostitute, albeit an apparently popular and successful one, a fact that comparison with *Celestina* only strengthens.

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[88] While to a certain extent 'a parody of the extracarnival life, a "world inside out"', Bakhtin also stresses how carnival is 'far distant from the negative and formal parody of modern times. Folk humor denies, but it revives and renews at the same time. Bare negation is completely alien to folk culture' (1984: 11).

[89] On singlewomen in medieval and Renaissance Europe see the essays in Bennett and Froide, including their introduction (1999: 1-37, in particular pp. 7-8), and those by Kowaleski (1999: 38-81), Mazo Karras (1999: 127-145), and Chojnacka (1999: 217-235), who notes that single and unmarried women were a 'marginal and sometimes ambiguous social group in early modern Venice' (1999: 218).

[90] See Deyermond on the mutual dependence between brothel and wider male macrosociety in *Celestina* (1993: 9).

When assessing Areúsa's claims to agency through prostitution it is useful to return to Stallybrass and White, whose theories encourage us to think about the ambivalent relationships of interdependency between 'high' and 'low'. For, as we saw in Act VII, Areúsa's lived experience of her 'pequeña casa' where she is 'esenta y señora' paradoxically engenders anxiety if not physical sickness. Her presence in the banquet scene demonstrates a desire to return to a symbolic centre, and to find a home among a community.[91] It is a paradox of her agency that Areúsa's passionate declaration of autonomy and the recollection of her own small space, which represents her freedom, takes place in the structure of Celestina's 'anti-home', the brothel, and is directed towards the authoritative figure of 'la madre' Celestina herself. Her movement to the house of 'la madre' from her small domain symbolises the interplay and psychological interdependence between centre and margins that Stallybrass and White advocate.

Despite desiring freedom from exploitation and freedom to affirm her own sense of self, Areúsa nevertheless exhibits a simultaneous need to be part of the hierarchy and a desire for approval from her 'superiors'. This can be seen in the interaction between the young woman and Celestina at the end of her speech in Act IX. Having evidently noticed the younger woman's desire for validation, 'la madre' Celestina responds approvingly and reassures her that 'En tu seso has estado. Bien sabes lo que hazes' (Rojas 2000: 214). Areúsa thus exemplifies the social nature of identity – something we also saw in Chapter Three with Calisto and Melibea: the individual exists, acts, and is formed in relation to other people

[91] On houses in *Celestina* as places of shelter, respite, and comfort see Gerli (1997: 69).

and wider structures. This paradox of the human condition and agency is demonstrated by Areúsa's return to the symbolic 'home' in Act IX.

At this point I wish to turn to another author who provides a poignant perspective on *Celestina* and *La vita delle puttane*: Veronica Franco, the famed courtesan known also for her poetry and letters, whose writings bear witness to the condition of prostitutes in Renaissance Italy. As we will see, while Franco was a courtesan and therefore to a certain extant less marginal in society than ordinary prostitutes, she nonetheless expresses the same dilemma: the need for agency, the ability to define one's selfhood on one's own terms, and the paradoxical desire for a symbolic home.

Agency in Abjection

To study Veronica Franco's literary works is, as Margaret Rosenthal comments, 'to examine the conjunction of social and textual issues within a broader articulation of class and gender issues' (1992: 4). In addition to providing a very real socio-historical context to the literary portrayals of *La vita delle puttane* or *Celestina*, Franco exemplifies Nanna's claim in the former that whores are no worse than any other category of women. In fact, if anything she serves as a rebuttal to the supposed degraded character of women who sold their bodies for money – a sort of 'anti-Celestina' or 'anti-Nanna'. Franco embodies a woman's

capabilities for learning and literary creation, as well as engagement with the civic world, and espouses Areúsa's righteous assertion that excellence is not given by lineage but earned by action. Her letters reveal a woman who personified many of the qualities said to define human dignity, being educated, eloquent, charitable, and engaged with the rights and social order of Venetian society.[92] It is believed, for example, that she advocated the establishment of a home for impoverished young women at risk of ending up in prostitution, the Casa del Soccorso, drafting a petition to the Senate sometime before 1577 in support of the proposal.[93] Despite her wealth and success, Franco herself experienced the precariousness of the life of a prostitute: she moved from house to house in Venice many times during her life, not unlike the female characters in *Celestina* and *La vita delle puttane*, and was impoverished by the age of thirty-six (M. Rosenthal 1992: 86).

Franco's writing makes visible a whole community of women in sixteenth-century Venice – courtesans and prostitutes – and speaks for those who were otherwise normally viewed through the eyes of and represented by the dominant (male) centre. One of the most powerfully affective letters from her *Lettere familiari a diversi* (1580) was written in reply to a friend who had requested advice about making her daughter into a courtesan. It thus mirrors the basic narratorial framework of the *Ragionamento*, being a discussion and exposition of the whore's life with the aim of choosing a daughter's future.[94] Unlike the irreverent tales told by Aretino's Nanna, however, Franco's letter represents a more direct

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[92] See M. Rosenthal (1992: 131-132), particularly chapters 2 and 3 on Franco's literary and civic engagement; as well as Chojnacka (1999: 226, n. 43; 227-230).

[93] Whether or not Franco was involved in the foundation of the Soccorso has been debated by Croce (1949: 76-77). Pullan provides an English translation of the petition (1971: 392).

[94] See M. Rosenthal (1992: 128).

'denunciation of a whore's sexual and emotional servility' (M. Rosenthal 2005: xix). In it she details the difficulties of a courtesan's life, the servitude she faces daily to the needs and expectations of male clients, the dangers of violence, disease, and poverty; ultimately she counsels her friend not to make her daughter into a courtesan for reasons that go beyond the girl's unsuitability for the occupation.

> Troppo infelice cosa e troppo contraria al senso umano è l'obligar il corpo e l'industria di una tal servitù che spaventa solamente a pensarne, darsi in preda in tanti, con rischio d'esser dispogliata, d'esser derubata, d'esser uccisa, ch'un solo dì ti toglie quanto con molti in molto tempo hai acquistato, con tant'altri pericoli d'ingiuria e d'infermità contagiose e spaventose; mangiar con l'altrui bocca, dormir con gli occhi altrui, muoversi secondo l'altrui desiderio, correndo in manifesto naufragio sempre della facoltà e della vita; qual maggiore miseria? Quai ricchezze, quai comodità, quai delizie possono acquistare un tanto peso? Credete a me: tra tutte le sciagure mondane questa è l'estrema. Ma poi, se s'aggiungeranno ai rispetti del mondo quei dell'anima, che perdizione e che certezza di dannazione è questa? (Stortoni 1997: 176-178)[95]

Her portrayal of the lack of choice that prostitutes, even high-class courtesans, face makes for a very poignant comparison. Franco's poetry and letters reveal the hypocrisy of a system that places women in situations that ultimately compromise their subjectivity, damage their dignity and force them to undertake morally dubious work (M. Rosenthal 2005: xix). Not only are they subject to the

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[95] Another equally damning contemporary view of prostitution as a means to feminine independence can be found in Sperone Speroni's *Orazione contra le cortegiane* (1575), where he mocks the courtesan to whom he speaks for thinking such work can bring her either autonomy or credibility: 'Credi tu forse, che la tua vita licentiosa si debba dir signorile, perché l'hai sciolta dalla ragione, et fai di lei a tua voglia? Veramente troppo t'inganna questa credenza, perchioché in tale et sì fatta vita, tu non sei libera pur un punto, non che signora'; Speroni (1596: 206-207; cited in M. Rosenthal 1992: 27, 28).

desires of others, they are robbed of their freedom of choice and their potential for betterment and excellence is denied by the servitude and moral damage caused by prostitution.[96] Franco offers a real-life counterpoint to Aretino's *Ragionamenti*, which though 'undoubtedly misogynist […] are equally critical of a society that limits women to positions that are necessarily corrupt and corrupting' (Moulton 2000: 135), and also provides a fresh perspective on the character of Areúsa.

In addition to detailing the difficulties a courtesan faces Franco comments on the lack of autonomy and agency in this life. For Franco, all the wealth and comforts of such an occupation are not enough to erase the indignity of having to repress and push aside her own sense of self and 'mangiar con l'altrui bocca, dormir con gli occhi altrui, muoversi secondo l'altrui desiderio, correndo in manifesto naufragio sempre della facoltà e della vita' (Stortoni 1997: 176-178). Franco engages here with the humanistic concept of 'Nosce te ipsum'. Her words provide an acute perspective on Areúsa's comments in Act IX, where she asserts that selfhood comes from knowing oneself rather than the role or work undertaken for others. For within Areúsa's decision to find freedom and selfhood through prostitution there resides a very real and problematic tension that is revealed through comparison with Franco: the nature of the office she has chosen means that she has to give her whole body and being to another, in effect

[96] See M. Rosenthal (1992: 127).

surrendering her hard-won agency through the abjection her function as a prostitute necessitates.[97]

Areúsa argues that prostitution provides her with the freedom to define who she is and what she does. Yet the narrative shows that she struggles to do so. The freedom that her identity as prostitute affords her is a fallacy; in reality she is constrained and determined by very real material factors. Her choice becomes meaningless given the fact that there were few, if any, ways to for an economically impoverished and socially marginal woman to support herself *other than prostitution*. Not every woman could marry or enter a convent, and there was often much competition for available work. While some women did treat prostitution like a commercial enterprise and entered willingly – such as Nanna in Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* – many were forced into it by famine or family, their 'choice' a meaningless one in light of the lack of other options.[98]

Franco's writing has a critical edge that resists the exploitative social hierarchy. She argues that women are trapped by their circumstances and finds

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[97] Kristeva's notion of 'abjection' is also concerned with the relationship between centres and margins, self and other, and is constructed around the simultaneous experience of fear and desire. The abject, of which figures such as prostitutes are one example, has to do with 'what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules' (1982: 4); but it is also something for which we may yearn. The idea of desire, or 'want', therefore, figures in her idea of the abjection of the self: 'The abjection of self would be the culminating form of that experience of the subject to which it is revealed that all its objects are based merely on the inaugural *loss* that laid the foundations of its own being. There is nothing like the abjection of self to show that all abjection
is in fact recognition of the *want* on which any being, meaning, language, or desire is founded' (1982: 5).

[98] Perry (1978: 196-203) has shown how the growth in prostitution in large urban centres can be traced to the lack of available economic or social opportunities. This has been addressed more recently by Ladero Quesada (1990: 116-118), M. Rosenthal (1992: 15; n. 19), and Chojnacka (1999: 224).

fault not in their moral depravity but in society's norms and conventions.[99] Franco was not the only sixteenth-century writer to address the role of society in the exploitation of marginal groups. Despite the fact that he may at first appear to be writing with very different aims to Franco, Juan Luis Vives provides an interesting and surprisingly supportive counterpoint to these ideas. Vives approaches the issue of injustice from the perspective of the centre (male, religious orthodox, learned); nonetheless, and despite his vociferous condemnation of vernacular works of fiction like *Celestina*, there are certain ideological intersections between his views on *emarginati* and the writings of Franco, Rojas, and Aretino. The difference is that while Vives acknowledges and condemns this injustice and the social problems it causes, and approaches them from a paternalistic perspective, *Celestina* and Franco and Aretino are experiential, providing readers with alternative viewpoints and highlighting the existential and emotional effects of these situations.

Like the texts discussed above, Vives is concerned with the problems of the socially and economically marginal, and with the condition of women. While the latter issue is addressed specifically in *De institutione feminae Christianae* (1524), the two concerns intersect in a later work of his, *De subventione pauperum sive de humanis necessitatibus* (1526).[100] Charles Fantazzi writes that

> to Vives's way of thinking there was a strong similarity between the underpriviledged status of women in his time, solely because

[99] The founders of the *Casas* for prostitutes similarly 'saw the problem of prostitution not in the innate sinfulness of the women involved, but in the poverty and lack of choices that increasingly confronted them in the late sixteenth century' (Chojnacka 1999: 226).

[100] *De subventione* was translated into Castilian as *Sobre el socorro de los pobres o Sobre las necesiades humanas* (1530), and Italian as *Il modo del souvenire a' poveri di Lodovico Vives novamente tradotto di latino in volgare* (1545) (Fantazzi 2008: 110).

> of their sex, and the condition of the poor, because of their economic status. (2008: 65)[101]

To Vives this similarity stems from the fact that constraints upon both groups are social rather than simply moral. In *De subventione* he argues that the human condition and experiences are relational and determined by other people and social structures, rather than defined in a vacuum by individual will and moral character.[102] Vives furthermore emphasises the exploitation and injustice of a society that forces *emarginati* to behave in ways that jeopardise their potential dignity. Like Rojas, Aretino, and Franco, he acknowledges that limitations upon human agency were gender specific. In addition to criminal activities like robbery and theft, the problems upon which he focuses involve women – such as prostitution and procuring:

> Clausa enim multorum benignitate cum unde se alant non suppetit, alii coguntur latrocinia et in civitate et in itineribus exercere, alii clam furantur; feminae quae sunt aetate bona pudore abiecto pudicitiam retinere non queunt, venalem ubique habent minimo nec a pessima consuetudine posunt extrahi; vetulae continuo lenociniym arripiunt et lenocinio coniunctum veneficium. (Vives 2002: 92)

> una vez cerrada la generosidad de muchos, al no tener de qué alimentarse, unos se ven obligados a robar a mano armada en la

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[101] Fantazzi comments that Vives's status as a *converso* and permanent exile from Spain may have made him sensitive towards those on the fringes of society (2008: 65) – an argument that echoes interpretations of Rojas.

[102] Book I frames the subsequent discussion with a 'general, theoretical, thoroughly Christian treatise on the human condition, especially regards man's needs and the necessity of mutual assistance', and Book II presents 'an astonishingly modern practical program on how to deal with the needs of the poor', which opens with a commonplace image of the body politic (Matheeussen and Fantazzi 2002: xv). See Travill (1987: 169) for a discussion of Vives' attitude towards poverty, and *De subventione*'s socio-historical circumstances.

> ciudad y en los caminos, otros roban a ocultas, las mujeres que tienen buena edad, dejada la vergüenza, no pueden mantener la honestidad, vendiéndola en todas partes por muy poco y no pudiéndose librar de esa pésima costumbre, las viejas inmediatamente se agarran a la alcahuetería y a los hechizos, unidos estrechamente a ella. (Vives 2004: 131-136)

Here the prostitute functions yet again as a trope or figure of thought through which wider ideological problems are addressed: the consequences of economic depravity, the relationship between the individual and society, and exploitation by the upper classes. Where Vives differs from the literary portrayals is in his solution, a programme of mutual assistance and welfare provided by official bodies. This approach makes those on the margins into passive individuals. His approach is paternalistic; it takes away agency and implies that social integration and positive transformation is carried out by others (wider social and political structures) on behalf of the margins. In contrast, Celestina, Areúsa and Nanna are depicted as having an inherent agency and drive. It could be argued that they are forced by circumstances to act the way they do and in doing so becoming other or even less than human; but they themselves do not see it this way. Rather they see themselves as having agency; they strive to make the best of their situation and to better themselves independently of any other person or social network.

I would argue that *Celestina* also brings to light an issue that is not addressed by Franco. In her inability to extricate herself from the very social structures she so desires to escape Areúsa provides an example of the existential complexity of human agency. Her desire for relationships with others is both a mark of her agency and subjectivity (as demonstrated by her critique of the

domestic servant, who is exiled from social contact and language) and a constraint upon her independence. In his schematic exploration of key words Raymond Williams highlights the tensions and contradictions in the term 'individual' (1976: 161-165). Originally meaning indivisible and unity, it was later used to designate distinction from others (Williams 1976: 161; 1977: 87). This movement in significance that the term underwent – from collective to the current idea of 'individual' – reinforces the dialectic between self and other.

It becomes clear that Areúsa is complicit in the renewal and reproduction of the social structures against which she strives. Areúsa's process of becoming, which we witness throughout the narrative of *Celestina*, epitomises the interplay between high and low, and also the dynamic correlation between creation and reception. That Areúsa is caught up in the very power dynamics she seeks to deny a controlling force over her own life is evident if we trace her character development throughout the narrative. While she was reluctant to talk about her past during discussion of such matters in the crucial banquet scene of Act IX – an attitude that seemed consistent with her insistence that it is deeds and actions in the here and now that determine one's worth, not origins[103] – as the narrative develops her origins form an increasintly important part of her discourse.

One of the few direct references she makes to her family comes in Act XV: when reassuring Elicia of her ability to take vengeance on Calisto and Melibea she declares that should she fail, 'no me hayas tú por hija de la pastelera vieja que bien conosciste' (Rojas 2000: 291). This reference has been interpreted

[103] Although we know comparatively little about Areúsa's past (other than the fact that she is Eliso's daughter and cousin to Elicia). We know even less about Elicia and Celestina, for whom there is no direct discussion about the means by which they came to be involved in prostitution; we arrive *in media res* into their world, their histories, and the action of the narrative. For all of Celestina's nostalgia we are not told how she came to do what she does, other than finding out that she was taught by Elicia's grandmother and Pármeno's mother.

to mean that Areúsa's mother, like Elicia's grandmother and perhaps her mother, too, was also a prostitute, *pastelera* being an office associated with prostitution.[104] It is interesting, however, that this reference should occur at the point in the work when Areúsa is trying to establish her own domain of influence (over Elicia, over Centurio, and over the lives of Calisto and Melibea). Despite earlier assertions that 'No curemos de linaje ni hazañas viejas' (Rojas 2000: 311) Areúsa's comment here reveals a certain pride in her origins and a desire to position herself within this lineage of powerful, subversive women.[105] Her willing participation in the play of power dynamics with other characters becomes more and more patent throughout the narrative of *Celestina*; and I would contend that reading her against Nanna in *La vita delle puttane* would have made this development increasingly more obvious. Areúsa therefore exists not only in an intra-textual dialogue with her mentor Celestina, but an inter-textual one with the characters of Aretino's work. Indeed, her desire to wreak revenge upon the two 'courtly' lovers is more akin to the devious plots and machinations of the Italian character, who reacts maliciously to any slight or put down, perceived or real, as well as acting out of sheer pleasure of the power she holds. In contrast Celestina's actions seem to be determined more by greed – or a desire to provide financial security; there is no evidence in the *Tragicomedia* that she engages in the sorts of deliberately destructive and vengeful plots that Areúsa and Nanna plan.

That this once exploited and vulnerable woman now willingly and almost gleefully represents herself as an oppressor can be seen in Areúsa's relationship

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[104] Snow discusses the family of Elicia (2008a: 295) and Areúsa (2008a: 296-297), and the relationship between the two women; as well as the significance of *pastelera* (2008a: 297, n. 15). See also the editors' note in Rojas (2000: 291, n. 61).

[105] For a discussion of this lineage, see Severin (1993).

with Centurio, a ruffian and mercenary who she pays in Act XV to take vengeance on Calisto and Melibea. Their association appears initially to be one of unequal power, like a relationship between master/mistress and servant, whereby threats of physical violence – 'si no, […] yo te haga dar mil palos en esas espaldas de molinero, que ya sabes que tengo quien lo sepa hacer y, hecho, salirse con ello' (Rojas 2000: 286)[106] – are interspersed with promises of reward and material or financial benefit; we are informed that she has acted as 'patron' for Centurio, for whom she has secured lodging, clothes, and work; as well as saving him from being hanged, freeing him from jail, and paying off his gambling debts on several occasions (Rojas 2000: 285-286). Areúsa believes that she has complete dominance over him, exclaiming at one point

> qué gozo habría agora él en que le pusiese yo en algo por mi servicio, que se fue muy triste de verme que le traté mal, y vería él los cielos abiertos en tornalle yo a hablar y mandar. (Rojas 2000: 291)

Yet Centurio refuses to do her bidding: despite initially having agreed to it himself, he subcontracts the work out to two other acquaintances. Though conscious that his refusal to follow Areúsa's orders may place him in danger this awareness is nonetheless not incentive enough for him to acquiesce to her demand. Centurio's rebellion encapsulates the tension between freedom and constraint that Areúsa encounters in her struggle for subjectivity. At this crucial moment, supposedly the apogee of her agency and autonomy, Areúsa's will is not fulfilled.

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[106] Perhaps an allusion to the soldier 'amigo' mentioned in Act VII; as noted by Russell (Rojas 2001: 533, n. 7).

Of all the characters in *Celestina* Areúsa is possibly the one that evolves most, transforming from the apparently passive, naïve, and vulnerable woman we first meet in Act VII, when she claims not to be a prostitute, to become the 'new' Celestina by the end of the work.[107] After the older woman's murder at the hands of her lover and his companion, Areúsa's decisions and manipulations drive forward the events that lead to the deaths of the courtly lovers. In Act XV she displays a similar attitude of pragmatism to Celestina and takes control of the situation she and Elicia now face with bravery and gusto, telling the other woman to 'pon silencio a tus quejas, ataja tus lágrimas, limpia tus ojos. Torna sobre tu vida, que cuando una puerta se cierra, otra suele abrir la fortuna, y este mal, aunque duro, se soldará' (Rojas 2000: 289-290). Areúsa's comment here, particularly the phrase 'torna sobre tu vida', signifies a need for renewal that she takes it upon herself to enact. She comes to realise that Celestina's death can be a positive occurrence for them both. Trying to persuade Elicia of this view in Act XVII Areúsa affirms that 'Por esto se dice que los muertos abren los ojos de los que viven, a unos con haciendas, a otros con libertad, como a ti' (Rojas 2000: 301). More than goods or property (though Elicia does inherit the old woman's house, with rent paid for a year), the inheritance they receive from Celestina is liberation: both because they have escaped the older woman's influence and hold over them and simultaneously on account of the skills that she taught them. However, freedom from their authoritative 'madre' is a double-edged sword.

[107] Morros Mestres argues that inconsistencies in the narrative make us question the validity of Areúsa's protestations of honesty and fidelity to her 'amigo' and her desire to portray herself as a mistress rather than as a prostitute (2010: 377-378, 369-370). Other critical interpretations underscore her deceptive calculating nature, and paint her as deceitful and lustful: Parrilla, for example, is of the opinon that Areúsa 'finge recato y vergüenza ante Pármeno y Celestina en el Auto VII' (1999: 19).

Liberated, they are also without protection and guidance, and forced to seek ways in which to better themselves and their situation.[108]

In the sixteenth century the Prostitute represented a figure of thought through which the concept of human agency could be approachd, as can be seen in the way the courtesan was used to exemplify social freedom in Renaissance Venice. According to Margaret Rosenthal, the presence of prostitutes and courtesans in sixteenth-century texts '[echoes] the anticourtier discourse so popular among Venetian writers proud of their self-appointed "libertà"' (1992: 28, 30); sixteenth-century works about and featuring prostitutes and courtesans furthermore reveal 'an insistence that human dignity depends on never subjecting oneself to the irrational will of another' (M. Rosenthal 1992: 30). It is strongly ironic that these women represented Venetian pride in social and political independence when they most exemplify the tensions inherent in the human condition, and specifically the complex and contradictory nature of human agency.[109] When read together *La vita delle puttane*, *Celestina* and the writings of Veronica Franco form a critique of humanist and neo-platonic notions of human excellence being founded on the possession of free will and agency. If the limitations that Nanna envisages are economic, then Areúsa's are decidedly more social. While Nanna suggests that women could bypass the hierarchies of gender and society, Areúsa reveals that they could not, that they, like all humans, are implicitly and inextricably part of the very power dynamics and hierarchies they struggle against. Indeed, as Jonathan Barnes observes in his discussion of

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[108] Witness Elicia's anxiety at the vulnerable situation she now finds herself in without the protection of 'madre' Celestina in Act XV: '¿Adónde iré, que pierdo madre, manto y abrigo, pierdo amigo, y tal, que nunca faltaba de mí marido?' (Rojas 2000: 289).

[109] An issue M. Rosenthal deals with in her chapter 'Satirizing the Courtesan' (1992: 11-24).

Aristotle's idea that man is 'zoon politikon', 'Society and the State are not artificial trappings imposed upon natural man: they are manifestations of human nature itself' (1982: 80). Williams, too, underscores the dialectic between the two by arguing that while a threat to indivisibility, society is a necessary part of the construction of the self, and that the individual is itself furthermore necessary for the propagation of social structures and relationships:

> 'Society' is then never only the 'dead husk' which limits social and individual fulfilment. It is always also a constitutive process with very powerful pressures which are both expressed in political, economic, and cultural formations and, to take the full weight of 'constitutive', are internalized and become 'individual wills'. (Williams 1977: 87)

Areúsa, Celestina, and Nanna play out the conclusion that Greenblatt also comes to at the end of *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*: 'the human subject itself began to seem remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society' (1980: 256). In an extraordinary contradiction, these women find agency through their own abjection; and in seeking to determine their own futures they are ultimately determined by the very social structures they seek to escape. The portrayal of Areúsa in *Celestina* sheds light on a fundamental tension and contradiction within the notion of freedom that Rojas himself outlines in the *Tragicomedia*'s prologue, namely that the tension between liberty and limitations is a generative process: the constraints against which human beings struggle – against other individuals, against material factors, and against social structures – are what ultimately define and create us. Not only that, the dialectical struggle for autonomy enables the continuance of social life itself.

The philosophical point that Rojas makes in the prologue is enacted in the narrative through characters' lived experience. *Celestina*'s portrayal of freedom and constraint through the figure of the prostitute places philosophy 'in action' and in doing so highlights new nuances and alternative perspectives on this aspect of the sixteenth-century concept of the human condition.

Part Two: Corrupting Women, Corrupting Words

The prostitute was 'at once desirable and despicable, appealing and appalling' (Cohen 1991: 201). However complicated and ultimately conditional her freedom was, she was regarded as a potentially dangerous figure. Like woman but not, she was a fiction of femininity who undermined social and moral virtues and yet who was not easily differentiated from 'honest' women, such as the wives and daughters of respectable families. Despite the acknowledgement in medieval and Renaissance society that prostitution and prostitutes served a social good and were a necessary evil we find clear evidence of a desire to control this ambiguity and freedom and regulate their social interactions. These attempts took various forms, as scholars such as Mary Elizabeth Perry (1978), Vern Bullough (1982), James Brundage (1987), Guido Ruggiero (1993), Jeffery Richards (1994), María Eugenia Lacarra (1992; 1993; 2002a; 2002b), and Elizabeth Horodowich (2008) have variously demonstrated:

they included attempts to curb the prostitute's sartorial excesses and control their speech through legislation; mandates that limited them to certain locations of a city or town or that enforced temporary exile during certain holy and feast days; they were taxed and subject to inspections and physical examination to ensure cleanliness and prevent the spread of infection. Literature was also used as a forum to engage with and mitigate their perceived dangers and influence. While Pietro Aretino's *Vita delle puttane* demonstrates an 'Unresolved ambiguity about the status of whores, and indeed women in general' (Moulton 2000: 132), Fernán Xuárez's translation, the *Coloquio de las damas*, is an example of an attempt to control and contain prostitutes on a textual level.

Xuárez's aims in the *Coloquio* are very different to those of Aretino. That is to say, the Italian writer's lewd social satire becomes in Xuárez's hands a straight moral warning. According to Vian Herrero, this change can be explained by the fact that Xúarez was sensitive to the intellectual and social context into which his work would be published in Spain. The transformations he makes are not simply a case of 'autocensura moral o eufemismo', she argues, but an example of a man who 'está preocupado, como muchos contemporáneos, por el alcance de la prostitución clandestina' (Vian Herrero 2003: 334, n. 36; 337). As evidence of this she points to Xuárez's amendment of the *Coloquio*'s subtitle, which replaces the reference to 'Le cortigiane' – a word associated with Italian courtesan culture – with 'mujeres enamoradas', a term more relevant to the issue of prostitution in Spain. The *Coloquio*'s title also incorporates a statement about 'las falsedades, tratos, engaños y hechizerías de que usan las mugeres enamoradas…' – terminology similar to that often used in the title pages and *incipits* of the *Tragicomedia*. We cannot know whether the title was modified by

Xuárez himself or an editor or printer; nevertheless such a change suggests a desire to consciously assimilate the work into an environment dominated by the Celestinesque figure of the prostitute and go-between. Indeed, Vian Herrero comments that with the *Coloquio de las damas* 'asistimos a una influencia de ida y vuelta':

> Cuando Aretino se traduce fragmentariamente en España, la nueva versión se aleja de muchas de las propuestas originales de Aretino y vuelve a la interpretación moralizante que dieron los contemporáneos de la *Tragicomedia*. (Vian Herrero 2003: 329)

Like Rojas, Xuárez states that his intention is to warn young men against the dangers of the margins, here prostitutes as opposed to servants and go-betweens. He writes in the first of his paratexts, 'El interprete al lector', that with this book young men will be able to see

> como no es el camino ese para escapar de sus lasos, pues verán sus engaños, sus mentiras, sus dicimulasiones, su fingida muestra de amor, sus lágrimas sacadas de los ojos, como si las tuviesen en la bolsa, su falagar hasta tresquilar toda la fuersa a Sansón, y después dexallo en los Filisteos. (Gagliardi 2011: 6)

While in Aretino's *Vita della puttane* the conclusion is that the prostitute is by no means the worst of the three conditions, in Xuárez's *Coloquio de las damas* she becomes a problematic figure that needs to be contained rather than shown to be as equally bad as other women. The Spanish translator lays culpability for the dangers prostitution brings to society firmly at the feet of women, and ultimately not only prostitutes but *all* women. The problem is their essential ambiguity, the danger that regardless of their apparent virtue they simply cannot be trusted

because of the underlying suspicion that all women, deep down, are really whores. Although admitting that there remain a few scant examples of 'santas, prudentes, onestas, de rrecaudo e virtuosas' (Gagliardi 2011: 8-10), Xuárez advises his readers to nevertheless avoid all women for safe-keeping – 'para que no solamente huyan del peligro sino de la ocasión, les dizen que se rrecaten de todas' (Gagliardi 2011: 10). Wholly unoriginal, Xuárez's statements are typical of the type of anti-feminist discourse seen in the *querelle des femmes*, a debate that continued into the sixteenth century with works like Castillejo's *Diálogo de mujeres* (1544), discussed above.

While Vian Herrero's points are valid, I contend that Xuárez's use of the prostitute is more symbolically and ideologically complex than her argument suggests, and that this complexity is brought to light in a comparative reading with *Celestina*. Recalling Stallybrass and White's theory that what is symbolically important is often socially marginal, and the dialectic between fear and desire that this relationship entailed, Katherine Rogers notes that a 'common sign of fear of women in the Renaissance was the repeated attack on the whore, which often attributed enormous powers to her, more than she could possibly in fact have' (1966: 132). It is significant that Xuárez chooses to translate this particular text, a dialogue about prostitutes, and that he does so by re-framing it within a discussion of another issue of considerable concern in the Renaissance: the corrupting potential of language. As we can see from the above-mentioned citation, the deceits of the prostitute to which Xuárez refers in the *Coloquio*'s prologue are mainly linguistic; his concern is semiotic and with the act of communication. Fluent speech was, as we saw in Chapter Three, highly desired and sought after in sixteenth-century humanist culture. When it escaped the

boundaries of the dominant centre and was appropriated by the margins, however, it became an unnerving and corrupting threat to the social order. If a woman who spoke out was a potentially subversive figure, the prostitute exemplified this danger even more profoundly.

The association between prostitutes and language has been studied by a number of scholars of medieval and Renaissance Spain and Italy. Wayne Rebhorn for one has noted the use of these women as a linguistic metaphor in the Renaissance, whereby language is described as 'an enticing, wanton, deceptive, overdressed woman – in short, a harlot or a prostitute' (1995: 140-141). Emma Gatland looks at the issue in medieval Spanish literature, focusing on the Golden Legend (2011), whereas Elizabeth Horodowich (2008) and Guido Ruggiero (1993) address the topic in Venetian literature and society, and use the *Sant'Uffizio* records and other legal and official documentation to analyse the speech of Venetian prostitutes and courtesans. Prostitutes were a category of women that '[skirted] traditional prescriptions for women's speech and silence' (Horodowich 2008: 166). As *public* women their survival depended on their words as much as their physical desirability; in Renaissance Venice the courtesan's language acted as a 'cultural passkey', granting them access to noble and intellectual circles and even a level of respectability (Horodowich 2008: 177-178). Yet even the less prestigious prostitute relied upon words to make her living. Celestina's linguistic skills are what get her entrance to noble houses, taverns, and religious institutions alike to ply her trades; likewise Nanna's successful schemes rest equally upon her ability to *talk* her clients out of their money and possessions as any physical talents she possesses. Furthermore, the

link between prostitution and other offices that depended upon language skills, such as healing, is commonly acknowledged.[110]

The prostitute's speech was seen as dangerous because of its seductive, sexual nature – an idea that was rooted, says Horodowich (2008: 169), in the belief that language itself was sexual. Female silence and chastity were believed to go hand in hand, as were verbosity and licentiousness.[111] Women who entered the male-dominated and public forum of literary activity were liable for criticism that focused upon their sexual behaviour. A well-known response to one Veronese female author, Isotta Nogarola, accused her of promiscuity and immorality by arguing that 'the woman of fluent speech is never chaste'.[112] Horodowich suggests that some in early modern Venice even believed a loose tongue to be a metaphorical first step towards prostitution (2008: 173). The Spanish writer and cleric Fray Juan de la Cerda makes such a point in his handbook for women, the *Vida política de todos los estados de mugeres* (1599), where he notes that 'las malas y deshonestas palabras corrompen las buenas costumbres' – itself an echo of the biblical statement about the corrupting powers of certain words: *corrumpunt mores colloquia prava* ('Evil communications corrupt good manners').[113]

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[110] See Valbuena (1994), who analyses Celestina's linguistic skills against a socio-historical background of sixteenth-century healers and Inquisitorial persecution of prostitutes as sorceresses in Spain, something that M. Rosenthal (1992) addresses in relation to Veronica Franco in Venice.

[111] On the association between language and desire, with specific reference to women, see Bardsley (2006: 2) and Horodowich (2008: 173, n. 20); on discourse and promiscuity see Ferguson (1988: 97), and M. Rosenthal (1992: 6, 73).

[112] Horodowich (2008: 172; citing Jardine 1999: 56).

[113] I Corinthians 15.33; cited in Nakládalová (2010: 3, 4).

Indeed, as we will see, Xuárez is no different, for he describes the prostitute's speech using commonplace images of corruption, disease, and dishonesty. What is interesting about his depiction, however, is the fact that it is interwoven into another, broader discussion about the dangers of profane fiction. This is dealt with explicitly in the second of Xuárez's prologues, the 'Duda', where he raises the question of 'si es pecado leer libros de historias prophanas, como los libros de Amadís y de Don Tristán, y como este *Coloquio*' (Gagliardi 2011: 14). However, it can also be seen in the way he deals with the conclusion to *La vita delle puttane*. In the Italian Antonia focuses on the prostitute's social function, which is defined by a lack of hypocrisy. Unlike the Nun and the Wife she does not 'tradisce il suo consagramento' or 'assassina il santo matrimonio', but rather

> fa come un soldatto che è pagato per far male, e facendolo non si tiene che lo faccia, perché la sua bottega vende quello che ella ha a vendere. E il primo dí che uno oste apre la taverna, sanza metterci scritta, s'intende che ivi si beve, si magia, si giuoca, si chiava, si riniega e si inganna: e chi ci andasse per dire orazioni o per digiunare, non ci troveria né altare né quaresima. (Gagliardi 2011: 151)

Xuárez's translation, in contrast, undermines this by drawing explicit attention to the fact that prostitutes are characterised specifically by linguistic dishonesty. In an otherwise faithful rendering of the first part of Antonia's summing up (aside from removing the reference to Nanna's daughter Pippa), Xuárez inserts one crucial addition:

> …Y el primer día que un mesonero pone tablilla para acojer huéspedes, a de presuponer que en su mesón an de bever y comer, jugar y holgar, renegar y engañar, *mentir y murmurar, y dezir nuevas que ni fueron ni lo pensaron ser*... (Gagliardi 2011: 150; emphasis mine)

He thus characterises them above all by the negative potential of their words. In the mouths of these women language generates seductive, fantastical untruths. Xuárez's comment – 'dezir nuevas que ni fueron ni lo pensaron ser' – directly recalls contemporary debates about the seductive dangers of poetic language and profane literature; it brings the 'mala muger' into the same ideological field as the *liber pestifer*.

As we will see, prostitutes and profane books are both approached in an ambiguous and often contradictory manner that exemplifies Stallybrass and White's idea of the dialectic between centre and peripheries. Legislation and trial testimonies from Renaissance Venice show that prostitutes' speech 'commanded fascination and admiration, but sometimes condemned them to persecution and marginalization' (Horodowich 2008: 169) – a statement that could be applied equally to profane books. Like the prostitute's speech, it was believed that profane literature 'con su suavidad, su lascivia y su dulzura […] ablanda el ánimo de los hombres, lo arrastra tras las cosas perecederas y lo hunde en el pecado' (Casalduero 1977: 55). The words of the 'mala muger' and those of the *liber pestifer* were demonised for subverting men's desires; they were thought to lead not to spiritual and moral improvement or self-knowledge, only the incitement of futile, animalistic passions that degraded the very humanity of the interlocutors involved in dialogue with the corrupting woman or corrupting book. Both are subject to attempts to constrain and control their perceived

dangers, and are subject to moral judgements that demonise and ostracise them from the dominant centre, often using similar metaphors of corruption and dishonesty.

'Dulce Veneno'

The dangers of prostitutes' speech and profane works of fiction are depicted using a similar set of metaphorical figures. Medical images of contamination, corruption, poison, intoxication, and infection are frequent in treatises written about censorship or in works that address the potential harm caused by profane literature.[114] As we will see, these metaphors are used by Xuárez as well as Rojas to talk about prostitutes. But they also occur in the work of another writer who, as well as addressing the prostitute's position within society as we saw above, was concerned with profane literature. To Juan Luis Vives such books are a 'pestis' or 'pestilence'; he uses terms of poison, infection, and contagion to describe their danger in *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1524):

> Femina quae illa meditatur venenum pectore imbibit, cuius haec cura, haec verba apertissima indicia sunt. Letalis est hic morbus;

[114] For discussion of such imagery, see Nakládalová (2008; 2013: in particular pp. 84-94). The image of poison is the most prolific one used to describe *malas lecturas* (Nakládalová 2013: 92).

> nec detegendus tamen a me, sed obruendus atque opprimendus,
> ne alias et odore offendat et contagio inquinet.[115]

While his concern is directed towards women readers, who were thought to be particularly vulnerable to *liber pestifer*, the effects of profane literature upon both genders was broadly acknowledged. So great is the pernicious influence of profane books according to Vives, that 'satius erit libros de arte lenonia (sit honos auribus) scribi'.[116]

As already mentioned, the association between prostitutes and language is clearly an issue of concern for Xuárez. He characterises these women in biblical terms as a social, moral, and physical corruption that threatens not only the social order but also humanity's very existence. The prostitute is the cause of disease on both a literal, physical level, and a figurative one. In his comment that she brings 'la plaga y dolencia no sabida de los antiguos, ni escrita por los médicos, la qual cada nación la echa a los estraños' (Gagliardi 2011: 4), Xuárez is of course talking about syphilis, a disease prevalent throughout Europe in this century. However, it is interesting that he then underlines this point through the analogy of the prostitute's *words*. Citing passages from the Proverbs of Solomon (no. 5 and 7) in the first of his paratexts, 'El interprete al lector', he warns about the linguistic deception they practice in terms that juxtapose the attractive nature of their words with their fatal, damning, and entrapping effects:

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[115] 'A woman who contemplates these things drinks poison into her breast, as this interest and these words make clear. This is a deadly disease, which it is not only my duty to expose but to crush and suppress lest it offend others by its odor and infect them with its contagion' (Vives 1996: 42-44). *De institutione* was translated into Castilian and published in 1528 as *Instrucción de la muger Cristiana*; on which see Fantazzi (2008: 92-93) and the introduction to his edition with Matheeussen (Vives 1996: xvi-xvii).

[116] 'It would be better to write books on the art of whoring (*sit venia verbi*)' (Vives 1996: 46, 47).

> Panal de miel trae en los labios la muger desvergonçada, y su garganta más blanda que el azeite, pero lo con que acaba es más amargo que el acíbar, y su lengua corta más que cuchillo de dos filos; sus pasos van encaminados a la muerte, y sus pisadas deçienden a los infiernos. (Gagliardi 2011: 8)

Using another of Solomon's proverbs, he then describes the seduction of a young man by 'una mujer vestida de profana, dispuesta para engañar las almas, parlera, andariega' (Gagliardi 2011: 8). The prostitute's capacity to deceive and corrupt is linked explicitly here with her status as 'parlera, andariega'. Her perceived freedom to move and speak without restrictions is subsequently contasted with the lover's entrapment and containment in Xuárez's gloss on the proverb:

> Cons estas palabras lo enlazó y con los falagos de sus labios lo atraxo. Y luego se fue en pos della como buey llevado para sacrificio, y como cordero innorante que no sabe que lo llevan para atallo al loco hasta que la saeta le traspase el coraçón. (Gagliardi 2011: 8)

The association between sweet words and violent outcomes is made explicit with the comment that 'aunque parecen dulces como miel y blandas y halagüeñas como azeite, que al fin es todo postrema, hiel, y camino cierto para la muerte' (Gagliardi 2011: 8) – a comment echoes a later statement by Nanna that 'le meretrice hanno il mèle in bocca e in mano il rasoio' (Gagliardi 2011: 119).

In a comparative reading of the *Coloquio* and *Celestina* it becomes clear that the narrative of Rojas's work exemplifies and plays out the poisonous effects of the prostitute's speech so anxiously discussed by Xuárez in his prologues.

Characters make repeated references to the noxious yet alluring effects of language. Most of the anxiety is fixated upon the figure of Celestina herself, who produces an 'ayre infecto' that affects her interlocutor's interpretative capabilities, entrapping and beguiling them (Burke 2000: 87). Indeed, the fear, suspicion, and anxiety that Celestina provokes in others stems not so much from her moral turpitude but her way with words. In Act I Pármeno describes the effects of her discourse in terms that mirror those used to talk about the poison and corruption spread by books. Her speech is at once an attractive yet dangerous poison:

> No querría, madre, me convidases a consejo con amonestación de *deleite*, como hicieron los que, careciendo de razonable fundamento, opinando hicieron sectas envueltas en *dulce veneno* para captar y tomar las voluntades de los flacos, y con polvos de *sabroso* afecto cegaron los ojos de la razón. (Rojas 2000: 78; my emphasis)

Pármeno conceives of the prostitute's speech as a trap that denies men of their will and reason – mirroring Xuárez's complaints that their words have little basis in and relationship with reality, and create fantastical, untruths that entrap the will and reason of their interlocutors. He knows that he should be on guard against the sweet allure of Celestina's language and its beguiling trickery; nevertheless he fails to protect himself against it and allows himself to be drawn into her machinations against Calisto and Melibea. Much later, in Act XI, he repeats his assertion that the words of women are not to be trusted and lead only to fatal ends but interestingly does so in reference to Melibea, a young woman who is referred to by other characters in the *Tragicomedia* as if she were also a

prostitute.[117] Suspicious of her quick capitulation (this scene comes just after Celestina has revealed her success with Melibea in Act X), he suggests that she is 'engañando nuestra voluntad con sus palabras dulces y prestas, por hurtar por otra parte' (Rojas 2000: 235), comparing her to a fortune-teller who robs someone while reading their palm and later a siren, 'cuyo canto embelesaba a los marineros y los llevaba al desastre' – a figure that symbolises what Lobera et al call 'el poder destructivo de las pasiones y de la seducción femenina' (Rojas 2000: 236, n. 47). Once again, women's speech is viewed as a snare that will lead to physical harm if not death:

> Pues alahé, madre, con duces palabras están muchas injurias vengadas. El falso boizuelo con su blando cencerrar trae las perdices a la red; el canto de la serena engaña los simples marineros con su dulzor; así está con su mansedumbre y concesión presta querrá tomar una manada de nosotros a su salvo. Purgará su inocencia con la honra de Calisto y con nuestra muerte. (Rojas 2000: 235-236)

While Pármeno presents Melibea as the instigator of this linguistic deceit and their downfall, the young woman in turn displays awareness of the disorder that the old prostitute and go-between's words have the potential to cause. In reaction to Celestina's persuasions in Act IV, for example, she claims that 'No se dice en vano que el más empecible miembro del mal hombre o mujer es la

[117] For example, in Act VI Celestina talks of the deceptions practiced by high-born women in relationships and states that 'si así no fuese, ninguna diferencia habría entre las públicas que aman, a las escondidas doncellas, si todas dijesen "sí" a la entrada de su primer requerimiento, en viendo que de alguno eran amadas' (Rojas 2000: 147); arguing furthermore that just like prostitutes, 'doncellas encerradas' such as Melibea resort to subterfuge and deceit in order to get their way: 'rompen paredes, abren ventanas, fingen enfermedades. A los cherriadores quicios de las puertas hacen con aceites usar su oficio sin ruido' (Rojas 2000: 103).

lengua' (Rojas 2000: 126), and also refers to her speech in terms of corruption, stating later in the same act that 'No me maravillo, que un solo maestro de vicios dicen que basta para corromper un gran pueblo' (Rojas 2000: 131). It is perhaps no coincidence that Pármeno and Melibea are the two characters who are most frequently the focus of Celestina's persuasions.

In his translation of Aretino Xuárez's viewpoint is moral and seeks to demonise both 'bad' women and 'bad' books. But I contend that a comparative reading with *Celestina* reveals the ideological complexity of the symbolic figure of the prostitute, and by extention profane literature. While the *Coloquio* and *Celestina* both characterise her speech as corrupt and corrupting, deceitful and dishonest, the latter provides a more nuanced perspective. The prostitute's language exemplifies Stallybrass and White's notion that 'the top includes that low symbolically, as a primary *eroticized* constituent of its own fantasy life', resulting in 'a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, *fear and desire*' (1986: 4-5; my emphasis). And indeed, there is not only evident fear of their words in *Celestina* but very tangible desire, which is manifested in the use of terms like 'dulce', 'miel', 'sabroso', and 'deleite'. Venetian courtesans were known to charge different rates for conversation alone, suggesting that discourse was frequently a desirable element of their work in and of itself – an idea that find expression in the *Tragicomedia*, where Mary Malcolm Gaylord notes that words, and particularly those of Celestina, are themselves objects of lust and commerce (1991).[118] Celestina's words are treated as valuable objects to be coveted in and of themselves, above all by characters who profess most to disdain them. For all of their supposed aversion and reticence to acquiesce to the 'dulce veneno' of

[118] On centrality of language to the courtesan's business see Horodowich (2008: 166, 176).

Celestina's words, for example, Pármeno and Melibea ultimately see possibility and even emancipation in the old bawd's linguistic traps.

'Lingua Serpentina'

According to Margaret Rosenthal the prostitute creates 'an ever-changing yet credible façade' that is founded upon 'the union of artifice and improvised and invented speech' (2005: xvii). This invention and ambiguity clearly provoked anxiety in Xuárez, as evidenced in the *Coloquio*'s paratexts, which attempt to mitigate and contain it. His fear of the prostitute's propensity to 'mentir y murmurar, y dezir nuevas que ni fueron ni lo pensaron ser' aligns with contemporary preoccupation with the potential for profane literature to lead readers astray into worlds that held little association with reality – an idea that goes back to Plato's banishment of poets out of fear that the seductive nature of their words would bring to life things that could or should not otherwise exist.[119] According to Iveta Nakládalová, Renaissance writers and moralists saw in fiction a problematic lack of verisimilitude. It represented

> una amenaza *ontológica*, porque la existencia misma de la ficción persuasiva desestabiliza la autoridad de la verdad, creando un espacio en el cual se difumina la frontera entre lo verificable y lo possible. (Nakládalová 2013: 89; emphasis author's own)

The destabilisation of the supposedly immutable character of reality comes to the fore in the narrative of *Celestina*, above all in the speech of the eponymous

[119] See Casalduero (1977, 46-53, particularly p. 49, 55).

character herself, who Gilman calls 'Spain's finest orator' (1972: 314) and Azar describes as using words 'as if she could establish, in every utterance, the world anew' (1984: 10). Azar contends that Celestina exemplifies the fact that 'to speak' not only has the meaning of 'to say' but 'to do' or 'to create' – as we saw in Chapter Three's discussion of the material and generative force of words.[120] In Act IX, for example, Celestina's nostalgic descriptions of past times are so powerfully voiced that Lucrecia believes herself physically present in the world that the old bawd's speech evokes:

> Por cierto ya se me había olvidado mi principal demanda y mensaje con la memoria de ese tan alegre tiempo como has contado, y así me estuviera un año sin comer, escuchándote, y pensando en aquella vida buena que aquellas mozas gozarían, que me parece y semeja que estó yo agora en ella. (Rojas 2000: 218)

Lucrecia's reaction exemplifies the common belief that the voice was a powerful element that could affect a listener in the same way as an image (Burke 2000: 84).[121] Celestina's skills are based on what Eloisa Palafox (1997) calls the 'mágico-profético' power of spoken language and what D. J. Gifford (1981) labels 'verbal fascinatio'. She uses elements with distinctively oral origins, *refranes*, songs, *maldiciones* (Palafox 1997: 224), as well as linguistic and psychological techniques derived from the incantations of *curanderas* and sorceresses (Gifford 1981: 32), and which were believed to possess a real capacity to change the world. Lucrecia's statement furthermore points to the experience of *delectatio morosa*, or

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[120] For a broad discussion of magic and rhetoric, see Covino (1994: 38).

[121] Hearing and seeing were closely associated: 'Visus et auditus fragilis sunt ostia mentis' [Sight and fragile hearing are the doors of the mind] (Kolve 1984; cited in Burke 2000: 81).

pleasure taken in sinful thoughts, which was believed not only to be a sin of imagination but of language (Vega 2013b: 209), and was brought about by hearing or reading corrupting words.

Contemporary concern with the prostitute's language stemmed from its potential to entrap the will and reason of their interlocutors. It is characterised as a negative force of coercion by Xuárez, an idea that is also explored in the *Tragicomedia*, though as we will see to demonstrably different effect. The coercive effects of the prostitute's words are explored most explicitly in the discourse between Celestina and Melibea in Acts IV and X, key scenes for the work's representation of the relationship between the prostitute and language, and the tension between freedom and constraint. Their speech in these instances is nothing short of a battle of wills through words; as George A. Shipley demonstrates (1975) both women 'concert through conceit' and twist conventional images of sickness and healing in order to try out various subject positions and come to an agreed means of progressing with the business at hand – Calisto and Melibea's clandestine affair. I would agree with Shipley's assertion that 'The key achievement in Act IV has as much to do with communication as with seduction' (1975: 328). Act IV is also the moment that Celestina's *philocaptio* spell, previously conjured in Act III to capture Melibea's will and engender in her a desire for Calisto, makes its appearance.[122] My intention is not to provide another summary of the way in which the *philocaptio* spell may or may not work,

[122] The *philocaptio* spell, and magic in general, has been a topic of considerable attention and debate with scholars disagreeing as to the function and importance of Celestina's enchantments upon characters' actions and the development of the narrative. An overview of the arguments and primary work can be found in Vian Herrero (1990) and more recently Severin (2007). Deyermond (1977) and Russell (1978) represent two scholars who are of the opinion that it is of fundamental significance; whereas Snow (1999) and Iglesias (2010) and have recently discussed the *philocaptio* spell in terms of free will and characters' psychological make up and emotional states.

but to interpret its function and the imagery associated with it symbolically, viewing it as another way in which the problems of language and its corruptive and coercive powers are addressed, and furthermore how this can be associated with the dangers of profane literature through a comparative reading with Xuárez's *Coloquio*.

Acts IV and X are notable for their use of metaphors of binding and containment. As Deyermond (1977) and Javier Herrero (1986) have observed, this is manifested in imagery of trapping and captivity, objects such as the needle and thread (symbols of Celestina's other office as a seamstress), and girdle (interpreted as representative of Melibea's acquiesance to her 'bound', i.e. powerless, state), as well as activities such as sewing and hunting. I contend that the image of the serpent can also be added to this list: it is a key motif in *Celestina*, *La vita delle puttane*, and the *Coloquio de las damas*. With roots in the biblical concept of the Fall of Man, the serpent has long been associated both with the corrupting, poisonous nature of language and the female gender; and in all three texts it is furthermore associated with prostitution and implicitly signals the tension between freedom and constraint.[123] Herrero remarks that the figure of the serpent has a double function: it both penetrates and physically binds its victims (1986: 144). Yet as we will see, this binding is not without liberating potential. For in tempting its interlocutors to engage in behaviour that sits outside what is morally and socially acceptable, the serpentine tongue places them in a position on the peripheries that opens up new ways of experiencing selfhood, social relationships, and the world.

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[123] For another reading of the serpent in *Celestina*, see Blay Manzanera (1996).

Early on in *La vita delle puttane* when discussing her arrival in Rome (another Italian city closely tied to prostitution and courtesans), Nanna mentions that her first landlady has 'una lingua serpentina' (Gagliardi 2011: 31); it is no coincidence then that she is the person who instigates Nanna's entrance into this world of prostitution. *La vita della puttane* thus evokes the serpent's temptation of Eve, who is encouraged to pick and taste the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge, a transgression punished by God's replacement of the Serpent's speech with poison and Eve's exile from the Garden of Eden.[124] In the *Tragicomedia*, too, this serpentine image is associated several times with Celestina and her linguistic powers. Peter Russell (1978: 260-261), for example, shows how the link between Celestina's *philocaptio* and the serpent is represented visually in the woodcuts of early editions (1499, 1500), where a snake is used to symbolise the yarn in which Celestina traps the devil's power in Act III. The process of binding and releasing that the yarn symbolises is associated figuratively with language: the Devil's presence is brought about by soaking the skein in viper's poison, 'aceite serpentino' (Rojas 2000: 106), and unleashed verbally upon Melibea by Celestina.[125] As a result of this linguistic sorcery, Melibea claims she is being eaten alive from within by snakes in Act X: 'Madre mía, que me comen este corazón serpientes dentro de mi cuerpo' (Rojas 2000: 221) – a statement that could allude to the internalisation of the old woman's 'poisonous' words. However, it also recalls the startlingly physical if not violent image of the viper erupting from its mother's body in the prologue to the *Tragicomedia* – an image of

[124] Noted by Gatland (2011: 88).

[125] Lobera et al remark that 'aceite serpentine […] no deja de tener connotaciones diabólicas, por ser la serpiente animal tradicionalmente relacionado con el diablo (desde el Génesis)' (Rojas 2000: 106, n. 117).

release and rebirth that is brought into being through conflict and disorder. This 'rebirth' in Melibea is, paradoxically, brought about by Celestina's binding speech and through the old bawd's 'sotil aguja'.

In the *Tragicomedia*'s reinterpretation of the biblical motif of the 'lingua serpentina' as the 'sotil aguja', the serpentine tongue therefore undergoes a metaphorical transformation that adds new nuances to Xuárez's depiction, thus encouraging the re-consideration of the prostitute's symbolic function. For, rather than the wholly negative connotations of corruption, poison, penetration, and destruction, Celestina's subtle needle also symbolises regeneration, healing, and liberation. The 'punctures' that it makes in Melibea's body and mind are not simply destructive; they are curative, as Melibea herself attests:

> Paréceme que veo mi corazón entre tus manos hecho pedazos; el cual, si tú quisieses, con muy poco trabajo juntarías con la virtud de tu lengua, no de otra manera que cuando vio en sueños aquel grande Alexandre, rey de Macedonia, en la boca del dragón la saludable raíz con que sanó a su criado Tolomeo del bocado de la víbora. (Rojas 2000: 221)

Melibea here associates Celestina with the greatest of all serpents on earth, the dragon, a figure whose power lies in its tail (another serpentine image with connotations of binding) and which was associated with linguistic deception.[126] Yet her words here suggest that like the dragon's speech, Celestina's words are a 'saludable raíz'.

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[126] 'As the dragon's strength is not in its teeth but in its tail, the Devil, deprived of his strength, deceives with lies. The way in which the dragon attacks elephants represents the way the Devil attacks people, lying in wait along their path to heaven, wrapping them in his coils, and suffocating them with sin' (*Medieval Bestiary*).

Interestingly, despite apparently seeking to conquer *loco amor*, *Celestina* places Melibea's 'cure' in the mouth of a woman who was implicated in spreading it in the first place. The remedy for Melibea's 'sickness' is, like means of her infection, linguistic: 'Primero te avisé de mi cura y desta invisible aguja', Celestina tells her, 'que sin llegar a ti, sientes en sólo mentarla en mi boca' (Rojas 2000: 226). After wearing Melibea down with her incantatory patter, using the sonorous qualities of words, rhyme, rhythm, and hidden alliteration to lull the younger woman into a state of increasing tension and expectation (Gifford 1981: 31-32), Celestina finally names Melibea's 'disease'; and in doing so, she releases something in Melibea that the young woman had previously tried to ignore – her desire for Calisto. The effect of this 'cure' – the naming of Melibea's desire – is to bring this very element to life in her consciousness, to make it real. Melibea's admission and the voicing of this hitherto hidden yearning are presented as being a result of Celestina's linguistic binding. Her statement that 'Cerrado han tus puntos mi llaga, venida soy en tu querer. En mi cordón le llevaste envuelta la posesión de mi libertad' (Rojas 2000: 228) evokes her loss of agency. And yet, as we will see, her professed powerlessness here occludes a paradoxical freedom and truth – one that is brought into being in dialogue with the marginal but symbolically important figure of the prostitute.

Telling Truths, Inspiring 'Curiositas'

As we have seen profane literature and the prostitute are commonly characterised in terms of corruption, disease, deceit and dishonesty. These are not neutral

terms, however, but value-laden concepts used within specific ideological contexts. They establish standards that create an unequal structuring of society, whereby certain forms of conduct, individuals, and values are demonised and condemned as immoral. Xuárez's own interpretation of honesty is in line with medieval and Renaissance definitions that saw it as a moral issue associated etymologically with honour, dignity, and decorum.[127] In his *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, Covarrubias writes that 'honestidad' signified 'compostura en la persona, en las palabras, y en la vida; del nombre Latino *honestus dignitas, decus, laus virtute comparata*' (2006: 1066). Conversely, 'deshonestidad' is defined as 'descompostura, lasciva, escandalosa, y de mal ejemplo' (Covarrubias 2006: 1066) – characteristics that are attributed equally to 'malas mugeres' and *libri pestiferi*.

This issue of honesty is key to understanding Xuárez's treatment of the prostitute and her symbolic function as a metaphor for profane fiction. In one of his prologues Xuárez justifies his decision to translate Aretino's *Vita delle puttane*, which he classifies as an obscene work that 'parece cosa más para [...] echarle tierra y no sacar a plaça' (Gagliardi 2011: 2). Afraid that the examples 'de malicia, de traiciones, de engaños y de torpesas feas [...] más aína se tomarán por traça para sacar otros, que por aviso para aborrecer y huir los semejantes' because man's nature and reason are 'inclinados al mal' (Gagliardi 2011: 2), Xuárez desires that readers understand 'las causas ligítimas, *onestas* e provechosas que a ello no solo me movieron, pero casi me conpelieron e forsaron' (Gagliardi 2011: 4; my emphasis). In the final prologue, 'El intérprete al lector', he explains how he

[127] The *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico*, for example, lists 'honesto' under the explanation for 'honor' (from the Latin *honos, -oris*) and 'honrar' (from the Latin *honorare*); it is derived from *honestus*, which comes from the same radical as *honos* (Corominas 1980: vol. 3, 383). Nebrija's *Diccionario Latino-Español* also defines 'honesto' as 'por onrar' (1979).

sought to reduce obscene aspects of the original and cut those words that 'por la deshonestidad dellos' (Gagliardi 2011: 18) would not be tolerated by Spanish readers. He thus strives to replace Aretino's 'dishonest' words with

> otros más honestos, procurando en todo no desviarme de la sentencia, aunque por diferentes vocablos, excepto en algunas partes, donde totalmente convino huir della por ser de poco fruto y de mucho escándalo y murmuración (Gagliardi 2011: 18).[128]

Such interventions are an example of 'soft' censorship – a diffuse form of control that was internalised by writers, editors, and printers whose aim was 'promover colecciones que son, o que parecen, menos reprochables y más *legibles* desde el punto de vista de los umbrales de lo socialmente aceptable' (Vega 2013a: 71; emphasis author's own). Xuárez's modifications were ultimately ineffectual, since the *Coloquio* would be listed in the 1559 Spanish Index (Bujanda 1984: 467-468). Nevertheless, his approach demonstrates the continuum of reception and creation, showing how the former entails the latter, in the recontextualisation of a work, its symbolic function and significance.

Translation was conceptualised by sixteenth-century writers such as Xuárez as a process by which they could create new meanings, and '*sanear* la irreverencia o la obscenidad o, al menos, la de proclamar que así se hace' (Vega 2013a: 63; my emphasis). The use of medical images of purgation and exorcision underlines how these acts of intervention were conceived as a process that healed a corrupted text and made it morally useful for readers.[129] Despite

[128] Vega has addressed the use of terms like 'escándaloso' by censors in the sixteenth century (2013a).

[129] On which see Gagliardi (2011: xxix) and Nakládalová (2013).

his disapproval of *La vita delle puttane*, Xuárez nevertheless translated it, suggesting that he saw in it *something* of value. Indeed, his desire to purge Aretino's work of its 'dishonesty' emerges from a belief that 'No ay cosa tan mala, según los doctores, / De donde no puede sacarse bondad' (Gagliardi 2011: 156). Iveta Nakládalová observes that 'La idea de lectura implícita en los materiales preliminarias – prólogos y cartas nuncupatorias – postula que su fin capital es el de la moralidad y el provecho' (2008: 407). With his translation of *La vita delle puttane* Xuárez attempts to contain the 'dulce veneno' of these prostitutes: his 'honest' words envelop their 'dishonest' ones in a moralising binding that warns of their corrupting potential and speaks from a sanctioned, dominant position. The *Coloquio* is thus presented as a sort of negative exemplum for potential and actual sinners that will reveal the truth about these women.

Xuárez works hard to re-define 'honesty' within strictly moral terms, seeking to mitigate the worrying openness of Aretino's portrayal. Yet, the Italian author's use of the term suggests a semantic shift that Xuárez can't quite undo, particularly in light of a comparative reading with *Celestina*. We have seen how in her conclusion to *La vita delle puttane* Antonia compares the prostitute to the 'soldatto' and shopkeeper who 'vende quello che ella ha a vendere' (Gagliardi 2011: 151) – offices that played an important role in society. In doing so, she implies that the prostitute has a socially useful function. Indeed, if anything, Antonia's comment that they are 'pagato per far male' suggests that these women are condemned for the good of society and turns them into sacrificial figures. Although far from morally good, being associated with sex, gambling, and blasphemy among other things, when compared to the Nun and the Wife the

Whore is *as*, *if not more*, honest and straightforward in her social role, since her fundamental nature does not go against the very institutions within which she functions, unlike the Nun and the Wife, whose actions betray their vows and their role in society.

A similar semantic shift can be seen in *Celestina*. Rojas's work is honest because it portrays life in all its beauty and brutal vileness, without expunging or hiding either the miseries or the excellence of mankind. Instead of qualifying Xuárez's 'moralising' interpretation of *La vita delle puttane* in its translation to Spain, it re-opens the ambiguities posed originally by Aretino in his depiction of the prostitute and her social function as being one of truth not deception. For, while Celestina's language is undoubtedly a generative force, I contend that is not only used in the creation of fictions, as Xuárez fears, but in the revelation of truth. Her curative 'sotil aguja' exemplifies Stallybrass and White's dialectic between fear and desire, and the symbolic importance of the socially peripheral in a way that undermines Xuárez's attempts to contain the figure of the prostitute within a limiting label of 'pestilential'. Although characterised as deceptive and dishonest, Celestina's serpentine tongue paradoxically invokes a certain level of freedom and truth. The intrusive process of discursive binding that Melibea undergoes is, conversely, emancipating and generative: it awakens her to a previously repressed self-knowledge and a new way of perceiving and experiencing both self and society not sanctioned by the dominant voices of authority. In *La vita delle puttane* Nanna proclaims that the whore's worst vice is not lechery but greed. The narratives of both Aretino's work and Rojas's show that this greed is not necessarily only for money and material wealth, but for autonomy, for agency, and wisdom. With her serpentine tongue, the supposed

instigator of verbal seduction and linguistic corruption, what the prostitute tempts and entices her interlocutors into is not simply physical lust, but desire for knowledge.[130]

In *Celestina*, the eponymous go-between is held in high regard as a figure of wisdom and instruction. In Act X, for example, Melibea refers several times to the bawd's particular 'buen saber' (Rojas 2000: 228), calls her a 'muger bien sabia y maestra grande' (Rojas 2000: 223), and remarks that 'Vieja honrada, alégrame tú, que grandes nuevas me han dado de tu saber' (Rojas 2000: 221). In a comment that recalls Nanna's statement that 'Le meretrice non son donne, ma sono meretrice' (Gagliardi 2011: 99), Calisto remarks that 'Porque conozca tu mucho saber, que en todo me pareces más que mujer' (Rojas 2000: 151), alluding to the medieval notion of 'virile' women who overcome their gender. Lobera et al are of the opinon that this statement is ironic because it alludes to the fact that as a 'hechicera' Celestina *is* more than 'muger' (Rojas 2000: 151, n. 81) – i.e. she is diabolical – but I contend that her gender neutrality stems as much from her position as an authoritative figure whose function is akin to that of a 'maestro': she takes vulnerable young men and women into her house and under her mentorship. María José Vega notes that in the sixteenth century 'los pecados de la lectura se asimilan a menudo a los de la palabra' (2013b: 206): the dangers of reading were associated with the dangers of conversation or the act of teaching:

[130] It must be remembered that the Fall, and the serpent's role in it, is as much about the desire for knowledge as it is an awakening to carnality. This is discussed by Jager, who demonstrates how the Fall served as a powerful myth about language through which practical and theoretical problems relating to literature, power, society, eros, and knowledge have been addressed (1993: 1).

> En estos casos, el paradigma de la oralidad sigue presente en la percepción de los textos y en su juicio moral, por la comparación del poder corruptor del mal libro al del mal maestro o a la conversación con los malos, esto es, a los *colloquia prava* que ya condenaba San Pablo por su capacidad para corromper las costumbres. (Vega 2013b: 206)

The characters of *La vita delle puttane* and *Celestina* share an evident *curiositas*. Regardless of their social status they are not content to simply exist; rather their experiences of self-hood and society are founded upon a desire for knowledge – even if they ultimately reject the truth that this brings. Yet, this curiosity could be dangerous if directed at the wrong sort of knowledge. In her article on 'Los pecados del lector', Vega defines *curiositas* as

> un deseo mal orientado de saber, como una pasión por los conocimientos banales e inanes, como una diligencia superflua, *circa res inutiles*, ya sean inútiles por su irrelevancia, porque no nos conciernen, o porque conducen a una especulación estéril. (2013b: 219)

The term 'inanes' is used in works on censorship in the sixteenth century to refer to profane fiction; in the *Coloquio de las damas* the danger of this curiosity is signalled once again using the analogy of dialogue with the prostitute. Like Melibea and Pármeno and other characters in the *Tragicomedia* who are attracted by the old bawd's 'dulce veneno', Antonia is evidently curious about Nanna's life and her various escapades in *La vita delle puttane*. In his translation Xuárez intervenes in their dialogue by expanding Antonia's role and turning her into a more obvious sort of 'disciple' of Lucrecia's corrupting discourse, no doubt in order to highlight the disruptive effects of the prostitute's speech upon the social order, whereby the interlocutor is beguiled into replicating or imitating what they

have heard or read. In the *Coloquio* Antonia more obviously views Lucrecia's tales as a means to enlightenment rather than simply titillation. She compares her to a university 'maestro' – 'Gravamente yerra quien no te da una cátedra en París' – and refers to her as being 'más sabia que ninguna de las que oy son' (Gagliardi 2011: 80). Her simple agreements in *La vita delle puttane* are expanded into more explicit statements that elevate Lucrecia to a position of wisdom and authority, and posit her tales as educational and instructive. For example, the comment 'Mi par quasi credertelo' (Gagliardi 2011: 103) becomes 'En todo dizes verdad, como muger experta y muy sabia y que sabe lo suyo y lo ageno' (Gagliardi 2011: 102). Furthermore, Antonia's simple exclamation in *La vita delle puttane* that 'Ogni dí si impara cose nuove' Gagliardi 2011: 109), becomes in Xuárez's translation the far more ominous

> Cada dia se aprenden cosas nuevas, y por esso dize bien el refrán: "Biva la gallina" etcetera. Y aunque estoy qual me vees agora, no pierdo la esperança de aprovecharme de más de quatro cosas de las que te e oído. (Gagliardi 2011: 108)

Beyond the 'desperdicio del entendimiento' and futile application of human reason that profane fiction was thought to encourage, Vega remarks that 'es también un pecado de *curiositas* el deseo inmoderado de conocer y escudriñar los misterios teológicos, lo prohibido y lo oculto' (2013b: 219). I contend that underlying Xuárez's anxiety about the prostitute's speech is a preoccupation with profane literature's ability to make certain knowledge widely available in the vernacular and in textual forms that could be easily engaged with 'sin maestro'. Like many authors of this time Xuárez is sceptical of the function of profane works of fiction to impart truth and knowledge in a manner that was reasonable

or safe. There is an evident tension in his translation between the desire to educate and the fear that this knowledge would be misused and misinterpreted by audiences, leading to their eventual corruption and moral degredation.

For while the words of the prostitute and profane book are potentially corrupting and disturbing, both required the deliberate and voluntary participation of their interlocutors. As Vega remarks, reading was 'una deliberada exposición al riesgo, por lo que el *consensus*, el deliberado consentimiento y el peligro de la exposición, se dan por supuestos' (2013b: 221-222). For this reason Xuárez ends the 'Duda' by encouraging his own readers to think carefully about 'su condición y la experiencia que de sí tiene' before engaging with such works (Gagliardi 2011: 16).[131] The *Tragicomedia*, too, implicitly engages with the belief that readers can be 'seduced' by profane fiction by showing that the process of 'infection' was not involuntary.[132] Indeed, Celestina's evocative language is powerful not because it creates things as if from nothing, as Xuárez's comment that prostitute's 'dezir nuevas que ni fueron ni lo pensaron ser' would suggest, but beceause it unleashes pre-existing latent desires and thoughts. As she comments to Melibea, her 'remedy' works because the young woman is open to it: 'Gran parte de la salud es desearla, por lo cual creo menos peligroso ser tu dolor' (Rojas 2000: 222). Like the work of profane fiction, the danger of this former prostitute and go-between is that with her 'intelectuales ojos' she is able to see 'lo intrínseco' (Rojas 2000: 67-68), and gets to the heart of what is otherwise hidden away, covered up, or wilfully ignored, exposing things about the individual and

[131] Grendler observes that implicit in Renaissance debates about censorship was the issue of *how* to read (1977: 63-66). On reading and guilt see the collection of essays edited by Vega and Nakládalová (2012); and on the fears that lay behind the condemnation of works written in the vernacular, see Gagliardi (2007: 63, 68).

[132] See Nakládalová (2013: 90) on how the reading process involved a willing reader.

the human condition that were at odds with the view of mankind as a dignified being in rational control of his passions.

Like the profane work of fiction, the prostitute is an intermediary between her interlocutors and their desires. Both book and bawd were frequently represented by the dominant centre as corrupting; but in actual fact what *Celestina* shows is that they function as *interpres*: they give readers *intellectus*, or understanding.[133] The analogy between the book and the procuress can be found in another medieval Spanish text that engages with the perils and pleasures of interpretation in a similarly ambiguous manner to *Celestina*: Juan Ruiz's *Libro de buen amor*. Here Juan Ruiz explicitly associates the go-between, whose function is to interpret lovers' desires, with the act of reading. Such a relationship is made explicit when Ruiz gives both book and bawd the same name: 'Por amor de la vieja, e por dezir rrazon, / "buen amor" dixe allibro, e a ella toda saçon' (cited in Brown 1997: 83). Ruiz's conscious renaming finds a later echo in the reception of *Celestina*, where the eponymous bawd and go-between captures the imagination of audiences to the extent that Rojas's work becomes associated with her both colloquially in Spanish culture as well as formally in the Italian and French sixteenth-century print traditions, and comes to be synonymous with the act of procuring itself. As representatives of the 'necessary evil' that was prostitution, Celestina and Nanna played a fundamentally important symbolic role in society, even if they were socially and economically ostracised. Like the profane work of fiction this role clearly struck fear into the dominant centre, something that Xuárez's attempts to contain and censor such women in his translation of *La vita delle puttane* reveal.

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[133] See Brown (1997: 83).

Metamorphosis and Rebirth

A comparative reading of *La vita della puttane*, the *Coloquio de las damas*, and *Celestina* allows us to see the ideological overlaps and common threads that run through each work. It furthermore highlights the complexity of the figure of the prostitute. An ambiguous symbol who exemplifies the tension between centre and margins, it is perhaps unsurprising that she is used to address the equally complex issues of freedom and constraint, selfhood and agency, and textual creation and reception. With her penetrating and binding serpentine tongue, she was believed to embody the corrupting potential of language, to deceive and entrap men's wills and reason, incite fear and lust, and spread moral disorder. But I contend that with the translation of *La vita delle puttane* to Spain the prostitute's symbolic function goes beyond this, and accrues new nuances and meanings. She becomes the focal point for a discussion of honesty and corruption that can be contextualised within sixteenth-century anxiety about the corrupting book. Both profane work of fiction and prostitute tempt and encourage their interlocutors to transgress boundaries of proprietry, and to experience emotions and thoughts that were otherwise prohibited or morally dubious. They unleash unsanctioned perspectives on self and society, perspectives that were considered abhorrent or dangerous, and had to be contained.

More worryingly, perhaps, they show that dialogue with the margins was not only or necessarily always corrupting; it could also be generative and liberating. However, it is a telling indication of the anxiety that surrounded both

prostitutes and the reading of profane fiction that this idea is conceptualised in *Celestina* through the image of the viper bursting forth from the body of its parent, which appears in the prologue to the *Tragicomedia* and is repeated by Melibea to describe the awakening of her desires. This is a visceral reminder of the link between creation and reception – a process that *Celestina* wholly exemplifies. It also suggests the very material nature of the interaction with the word, which is played out in *Celestina*'s interweaving of language, self, and society and through imagery of penetration and binding.[134] In the Renaissance reading was not only conceptualised in terms of contagion and poison, but using metaphors such as digestion, gestation, conception, and parturition. Nakládalová writes that 'La *digestión* transforma el texto, comporta una metamorfosis y un re-nacimiento' (2013: 52-53).[135] Whilst I agree that the process of reading ultimately transforms the significance of the work in question, I would contend that *Celestina* demonstrates another facet to this re-birth: the fact that it brings about a change not only in the text itself, but in its interlocutors.

Finally, both profane literature and prostitute highlight the symbolic importance of the margins as a space in which conventions and ideologies could be questioned if not critiqued. Despite his desire to contain the words of his unruly subjects with a moralistic and misogynistic interpretation, Xuárez paradoxically recognises the existence of alternative perspectives even as he seeks to stifle their validity. Furthermore, I contend that the effect of reading the

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[134] Craik (2007: 3), Smith (2010: 431) and Nakládalová (2013: 91) have addressed how books involve body, mind, and senses. They foreground the fact that literary creation and reception is not simply a dialogic process but a material one, highlighting the transactional nature of the relationship between body and text.

[135] See Nakládalová (2013: 50-59) and Craik (2007: 4) for metaphors of digestion and nutrition.

Coloquio alongside *Celestina* may actually have been to re-open the original complexity of Aretino's portrayal. Rojas's work is too open and too ambiguous to be constrained by such an 'interpretación moralizante' that Vian Herrero proposes takes place when the *Tragicomedia* and the *Coloquio* are juxtaposed in sixteenth-century Spain; instead it provides a nuanced perspective on the prostitute, her function, and symbolic significance that questions rather than qualifes Xuárez's translation. Reading the *Coloquio* alongside *Celestina* instead foregrounds the early modern awareness of the power of literature, of profane fiction, to speak the truth – a fact that made it morally suspect according to dominant sixteenth-century values.

Epilogue: Meaning in Movement

At the symbolic heart of *Celestina* is a go-between whose function sis to interpret latent desires, and to mediate between and bring together disparate elements. My thesis has been that the work itself plays a similar role on a supranational level in sixteenth-century Spain and Italy. Both character and text as 'go-betweens' are characterised by their liminal and dialogic natures. They exist on the peripheries of their respective communities: *Celestina* the text an outsider in central philosophical debates about the human condition; Celestina the character an economically and socially marginalised and at times ostracised figure in her urban world. Yet they both exemplify the symbolic importance of the peripheries. Furthermore, their function is predicated upon their ability to connect with their interlocutors; they are constructed by and out of their relationships with others.

I have argued that *Celestina*'s significance needs to be interpreted comparatively. Thus, my study has placed the work in dialogue with analogous texts common to both Peninsulas. It is this European perspective on *Celestina*'s reception that opens up new ways of understanding Rojas's work and its relationship to contemporary ideological and cultural debates. In situating it within a supra-national context, I have simply followed *Celestina*'s own processes of creation and reception. This is a work that brings together disparate genres, conventions, and ideologies that circulated throughout Europe and reconstitutes them to create something new, in the process highlighting different confluences and perceptions; it also had near immediate success across national and linguistic

boundaries of sixteenth-century Europe. If as scholars we therefore restrict our interpretative perspective only to national disciplines, singular languages, and particular types of literature, we risk losing something fundamental about the way in which texts circulated and were read in the Renaissance. *Celestina* was part of a commerce in texts and ideas; and the period of this study, from the first quarter to the end of the century, reflects a time when this fluidity was acknowledged. Practices like *compilatio* and the continued popularity of *florilegia* suggest that reading was an act predicated upon comparison, juxtaposition, and the creation of inter-textual dialogues. Indices of banned books in the latter half of the century provide further evidence that Renaissance audiences situated literary works within textual relationships; and that they understood that it is through these dialogues that new meanings and new perspectives are created. Indices of banned books acknowledge this in their evident anxiety about reading and the desire to limit the spread of certain texts. By banning whole groups of books they sought to dissipate their cumulative power and contain the disturbing potential of the alternative perspectives they generated.

As this study has shown these perspectives could address topics of philosophical and theological importance, such as debates about the human condition. I have argued that one of the reasons why *Celestina* remains so interesting and relevant to sixteenth-century audiences is the fact that it is clearly concerned with the fundamental issue of what it means to be human and live as an individual in society in all its moral complexity. Running through every chapter has been an engagement with the work's exploration of various aspects of self-hood. Rojas depicts characters who strive for self-knowledge, self-fashioning, and self-determination. However, *Celestina*'s narrative demonstrates

the complexity of these issues when faced with the very material demands of life. It shows, ultimately, that the very definition of humanity is a result of dialogic interactions. In its exploration of the significance of the human condition, *Celestina* thus enacts on a meta-fictional level how the significance of a text itself, or indeed an individual, cannot be determined without reference to other interlocutors. It reveals that one cannot be human in isolation: although frequently characterised as a limit or constraint upon self-hood, society and community – and by this process, language and other elements that determine mankind – are paradoxically what construct and create us. *Celestina* thus reveals the ever-present tension within humanity between misery and dignity, and between self and other. Yet, like the go-between who dominates its pages, *Celestina* not only thrives upon these conflicts but is itself formed from them, using these tensions as the basis for the new and often alternative perspectives it generates.

This study has, as stated, brought into focus certain dialogic relationships that *Celestina* was part of in the sixteenth century. This is of course not to say that these 'conversations' were the only ones taking place or that these specific texts are the only possible interlocutors. Nor that the work did not engage with other ideological issues or debates. I have chosen to focus on this particular set of issues and texts and to structure each case-study in this particular way. However, I have no doubt that there is scope to consider these particular issues through other characters – we could, for example, look at agency and freedom via Calisto, or self-knowledge through Pármeno – or even for involving different texts. Such a change would undoubtedly produce different, potentially fascinating nuances yet again. Such an approach foregrounds how what *Celestina*

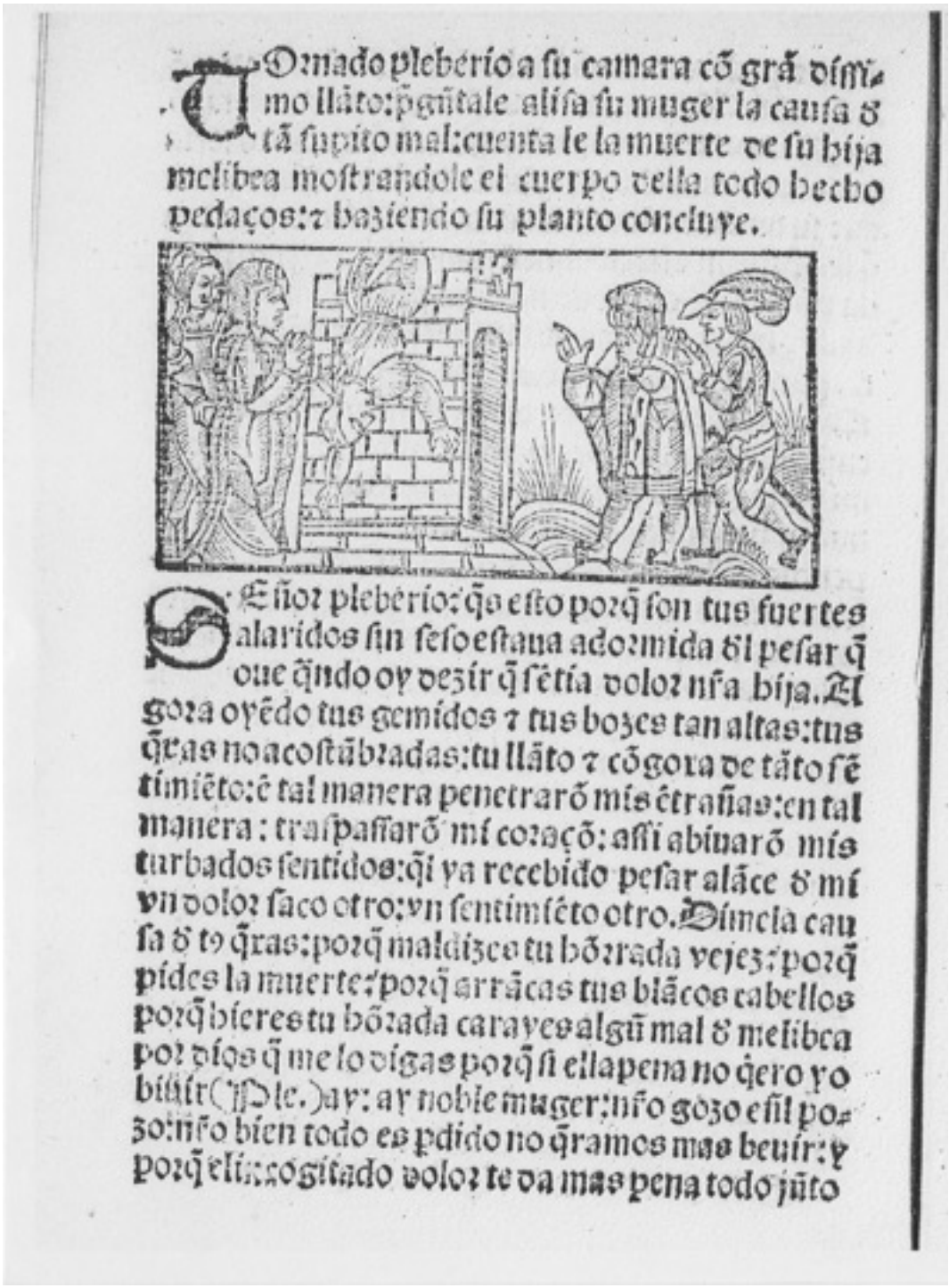
'means' is not fixed but fluid and even contradictory. It epitomises the continuum of creation and reception, reading and writing. Each act of interpretation, each edition or translation in which it appears, represents an attempt to fix and shape *Celestina* according to the horizon of expectation in which it was received. Yet these instances of containment, which preserve the work at a certain moment in time and space, are themselves part of an ongoing dialogue between texts and readers, and indeed texts and other texts, which in turn inspire the creation of new meanings and new representations, in theory *ad infinitum*. Like the human subjects it depicts, *Celestina* is caught in a dialectic between centre and margins, freedom and constraint.

Celestina shows the creative continuity between reception and creation in another way too, since reading changes the way we not only write but see the world. We have seen in this study how *Celestina*'s meaning evolves and moves beyond its medieval origins and is determined by the process of its reception. However, the work itself in turn determines both the interlocutors and the wider horizons with which it engages. *Celestina* reveals how texts are not passive objects whose meaning is wholly imposed upon them by the interactions of their readers but active agents in the process by which significance is created and the world understood. Literature functions as a space of contention and negotiation where non-official or unsanctioned viewpoints, emotions, and thoughts can be encountered – something that *Celestina* exemplifies brilliantly. Conceptualised though the metaphor of the 'aparte', this study has shown how *Celestina* interacts from the margins of the debate about the human condition to provide an oblique view and a fresh perspective on later medieval and Renaissance ideologies and agreements about the misery and dignity of man. *Celestina* encourages its readers

to look differently at the world. It demonstrates how texts are not finite and fixed but objects in motion: spaces that are constantly being re-inscribed and transformed in a process of metamorphosis and re-birth.

Appendix 1.
Images

Fig. 1. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Medina del Campo: [Pierre Tovans, 1530-1537]), sig. S1v [BNE R/3801]



Tornado plebério a su camara cõ grã dissimo llãto: pẽsãdo alisa su muger la causa & tã supito mal: cuenta le la muerte de su hija melibea mostrandole el cuerpo della todo hecho pedaços: & haziendo su planto concluye.

Señor plebério: q̃o esto porq̃ son tus fuertes alaridos sin seso estaua adormida al pesar q̃ oue q̃ndo oy dezir q̃ sẽtia dolor mi hija. Agora oyẽdo tus gemidos & tus bozes tan altas: tus q̃xas no acostũbradas: tu llãto & cõgoxa de tãto sẽtimiẽto: & tal manera penetraro̅ mis ẽtrañas: en tal manera: traspassaro̅ mi corazõ: assi abinaro̅ mis turbados sentidos: q̃l ya recebido pesar alãce & mi vn dolor saco otro: vn sentimiẽto otro. Dimela causa & to q̃xas: porq̃ maldizes tu bõrrada vejez: porq̃ pides la muerte: porq̃ arrãcas tus blãcos cabellos porq̃ hieres tu bõrrada cara: ves algũ mal & melibea por dios q̃ me lo digas porq̃ si ella pena no q̃ero yo biuir. (¶ Dize.) ay: ay noble muger: mio gozo & fil pozo: mio bien todo es pdido no q̃ramos mas beuir: y porq̃ el: cogitado dolor te da mas pena todo jũto

Fig. 2. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Zaragoza: Jorge Coci, 1545), sig. N3v-N4r [BNE R/3966]

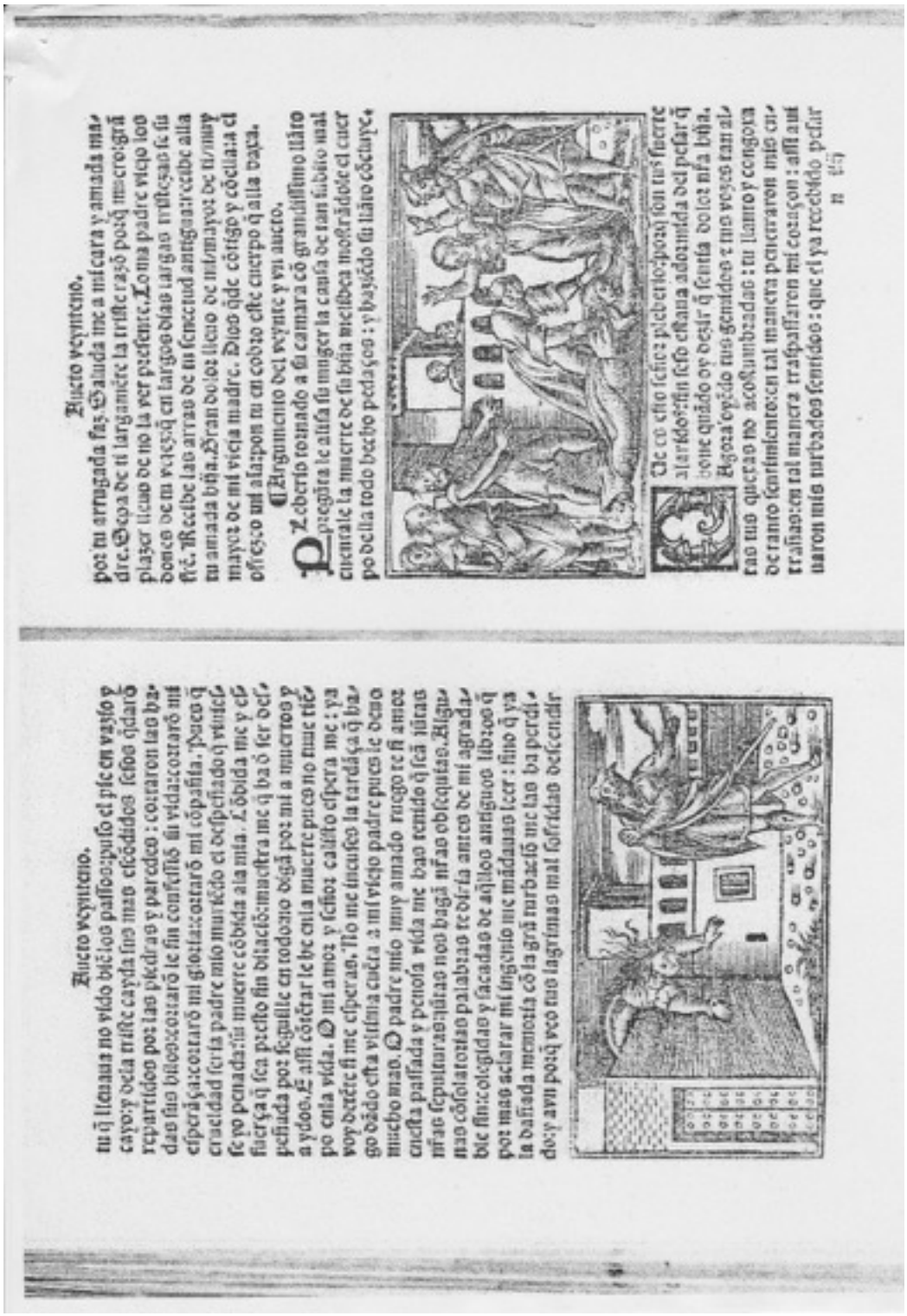
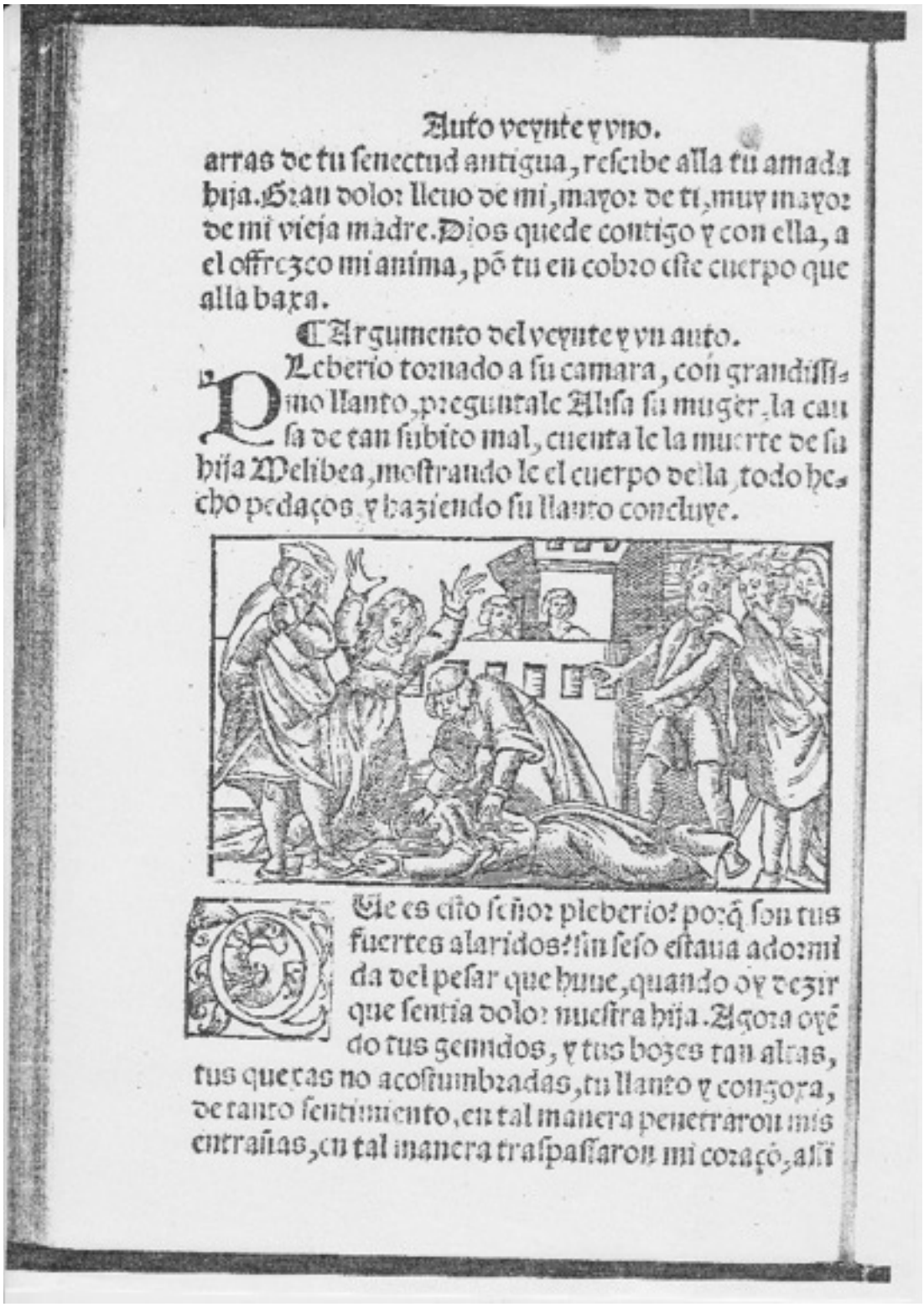


Fig. 3. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Cordova, 1561), sig. Q1v [BNE R/30464]



Auto veynte y vno.

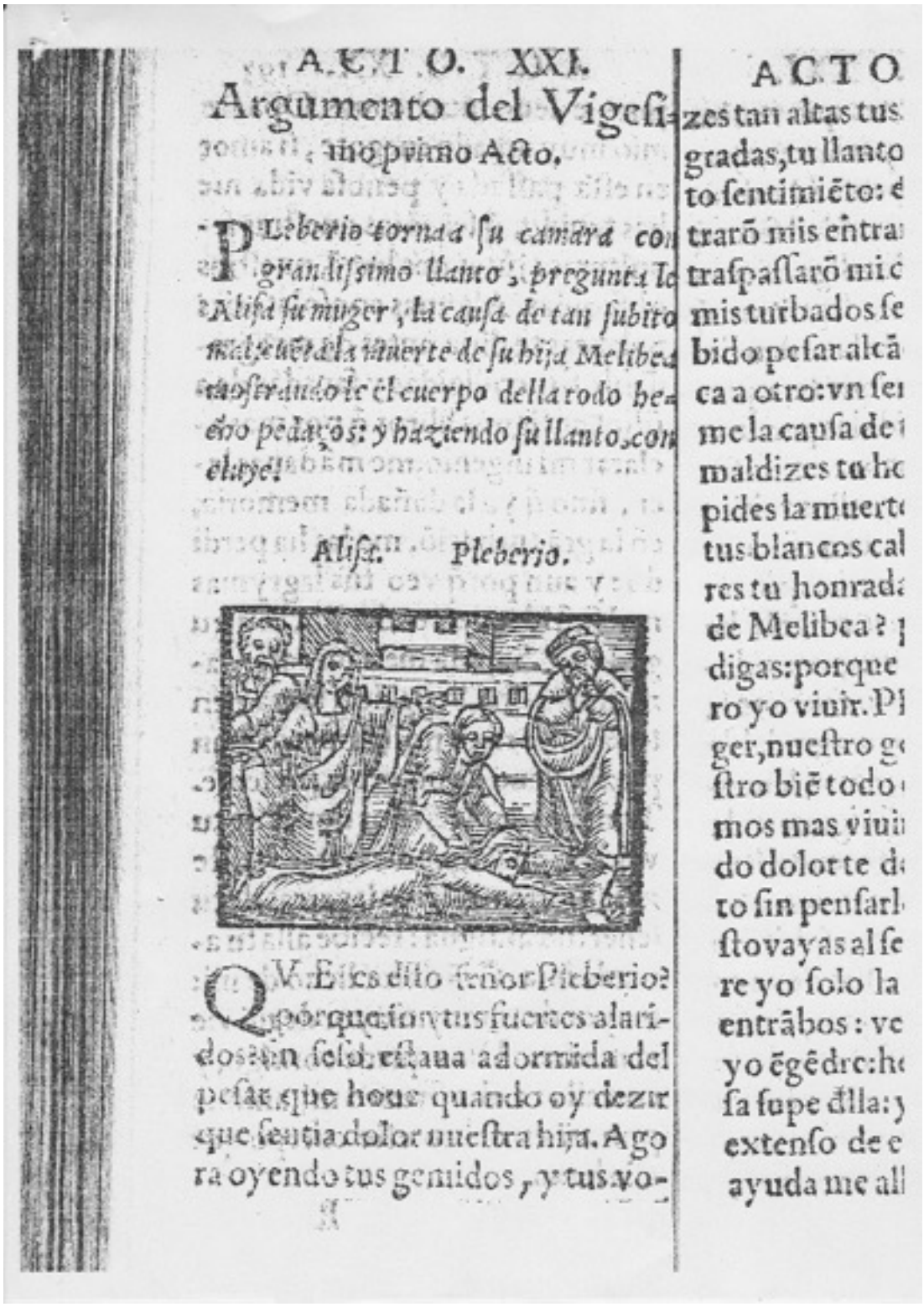
arras de tu senectud antigua, reſcibe alla tu amada hija. Gran dolor lleuo de mi, mayor de ti, muy mayor de mi vieja madre. Dios quede contigo y con ella, a el offrezco mi anima, pō tu en cobro eſte cuerpo que alla baxa.

Argumento del veynte y vn auto.

Pleberio tornado a ſu camara, con grandiſſimo llanto, pregunrale Alisa ſu muger, la cauſa de tan ſubito mal, cuenta le la muerte de ſu hija Melibea, moſtrando le el cuerpo della, todo hecho pedaços, y haziendo ſu llanto concluye.

Que es eſto ſeñor Pleberio? porq̄ ſon tus fuertes alaridos? ſin ſeſo eſtaua adormida del peſar que hune, quando oy dezir que ſentia dolor nueſtra hija. Agora oyēdo tus gemidos, y tus bozes tan altas, tus quexas no acoſtumbradas, tu llanto y congoxa, de tanto ſentimiento, en tal manera penetraron mis entrañas, en tal manera traſpaſſaron mi coraçō, alli

Fig. 4. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Medina del Campo: Francisco del Canto, 1582), f.193v [BNE R/7491]



ACTO. XXI.

Argumento del Vigesimo primo Acto.

PLeberio torna a su camara con grandissimo llanto, pregunta la Alisa su muger, la causa de tan subito mal: sabe la muerte de su hija Melibea mostrandole el cuerpo della todo hecho pedaços: y haziendo su llanto, con ella ye.

Alisa. Plebrio.

QVE es dito señor Plebrio? porque con tus fuentes alaridos no has sosegado esta aduormida del pesar que houe quando oy dezir que sentia dolor nuestra hija. Agora oyendo tus gemidos, y tus yo-

ACTO

zes tan altas tus
gradas, tu llanto
to sentimiẽto: e
trarõ mis entra
traspassarõ mi c
mis turbados se
bido pesar alcã
ca a otro: vn ser
me la causa de
maldizes tu ho
pides la muert
tus blancos cab
res tu honrad
de Melibea? p
digas: porque
ro yo viuir. Pl
ger, nuestro g
stro biẽ todo
mos mas viui
do dolor te d
to sin pensarl
stovayas al se
re yo solo la
entrãbos: ve
yo ẽgẽdre: h
sa supe dlla: y
extenso de e
ayuda me all

Fig 5. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Valencia: Joan Navarro, 1575), sig. Q6v-Q7r [BNE R/ 7840]

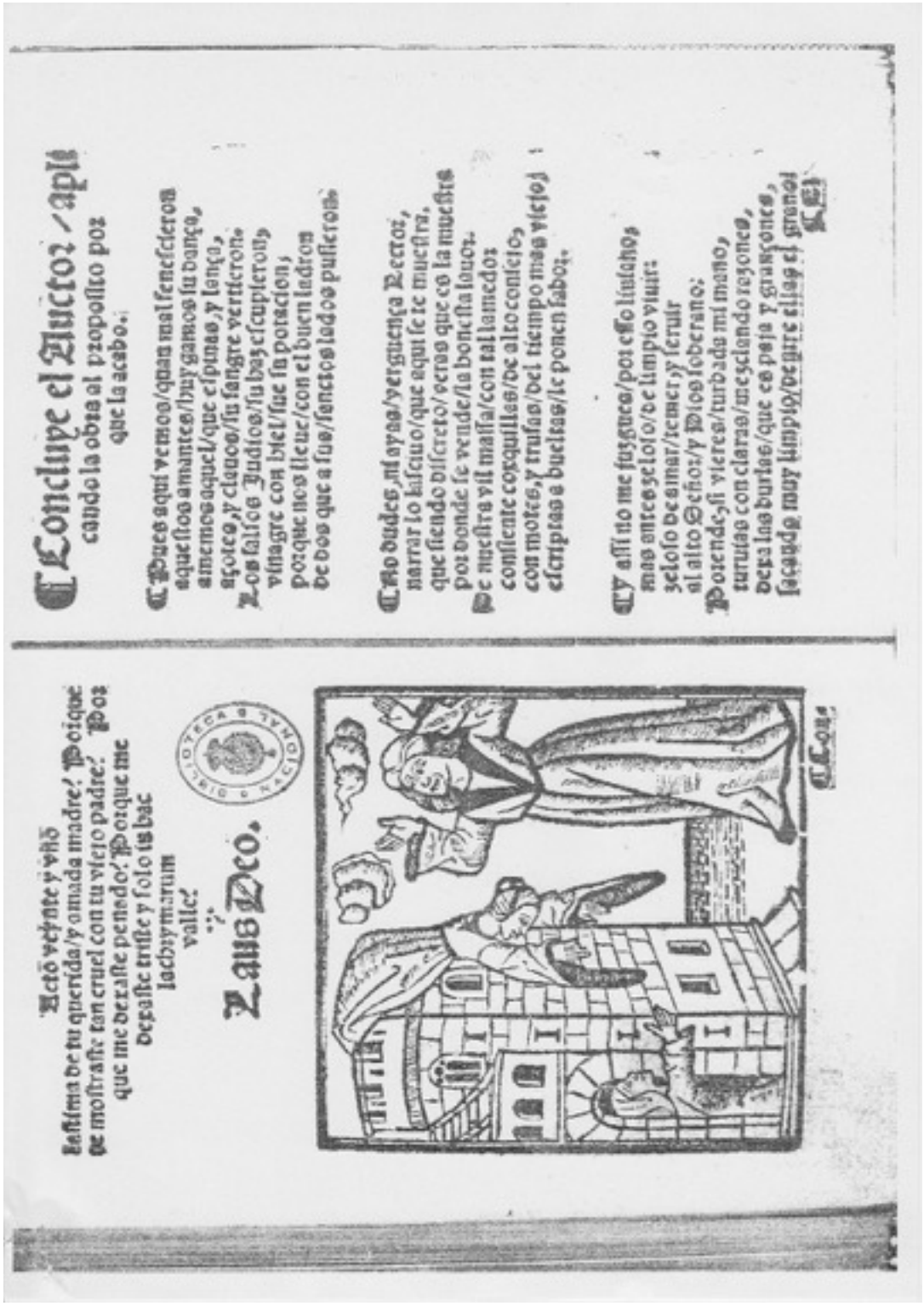


Fig. 6. *Il libro del cortegiano: del Conte Baldessar Castiglione* (Venice: Girolamo Scoto, 1556), sig. A1v-A2r [UCL Special Collections Strong Room Castiglione 1556 (1)]

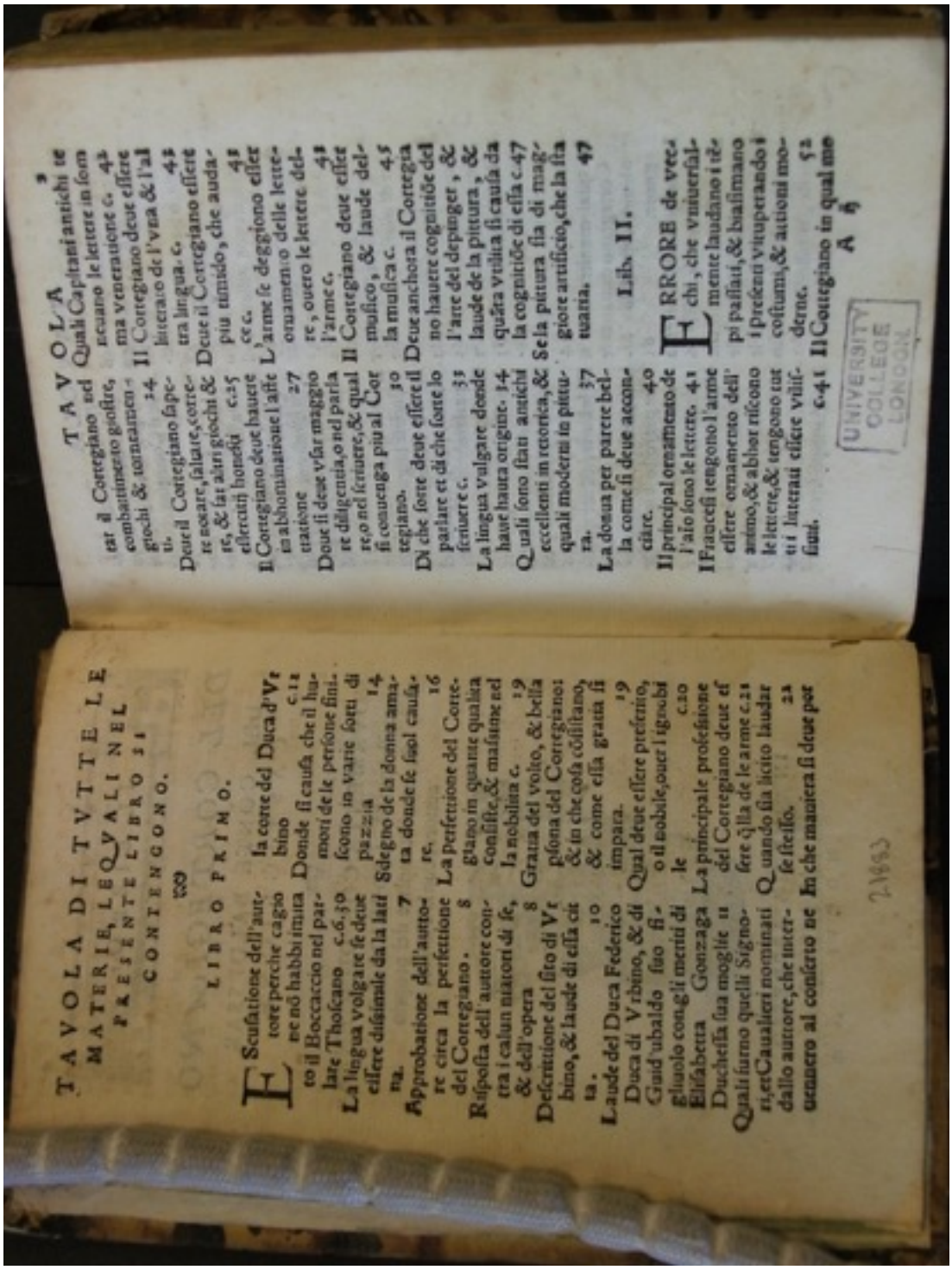


Fig. 7. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrariii, 1556),

sig. B4v [BSL 1129371 P.o.hisp. 196 k]

ausencia me ha de causar .

Meli . Por gran premio tienes este Calisto ?

Cal. Tengolo por tanto en uerdad , que si Dios me diesse enel cielo la silla sobre sus sanctos no lo terniapor tanta felicidad.

Mel. Pues aun mas yguat galardon te daré yo si perseueras .

Cal . O bienauenturadas orejas mias que indignamente tan gran palabra hauyes oydo .

Mel. Mas desuenturadas de que me acabes de oyr , porque la paga serà tan fiera , qual merece tu loco atreuimiento y el intento de tus palabras ha seydo , como de ingenio de tal hombre como tu hauer de salir para se perder enla uirtud de tal muger como yo . Vete uete de ahi torpe que no puede mi paciencia tolerar, que haya subido en coraçon humano conmigo en illicito amor communicar su deleyte .

Cal . Yrè como aquel contra quien solamente la aduersa fortuna pone en su estudio con odio cruel. Sempronio , Sempronio , Sempronio . Donde està este maldito ?

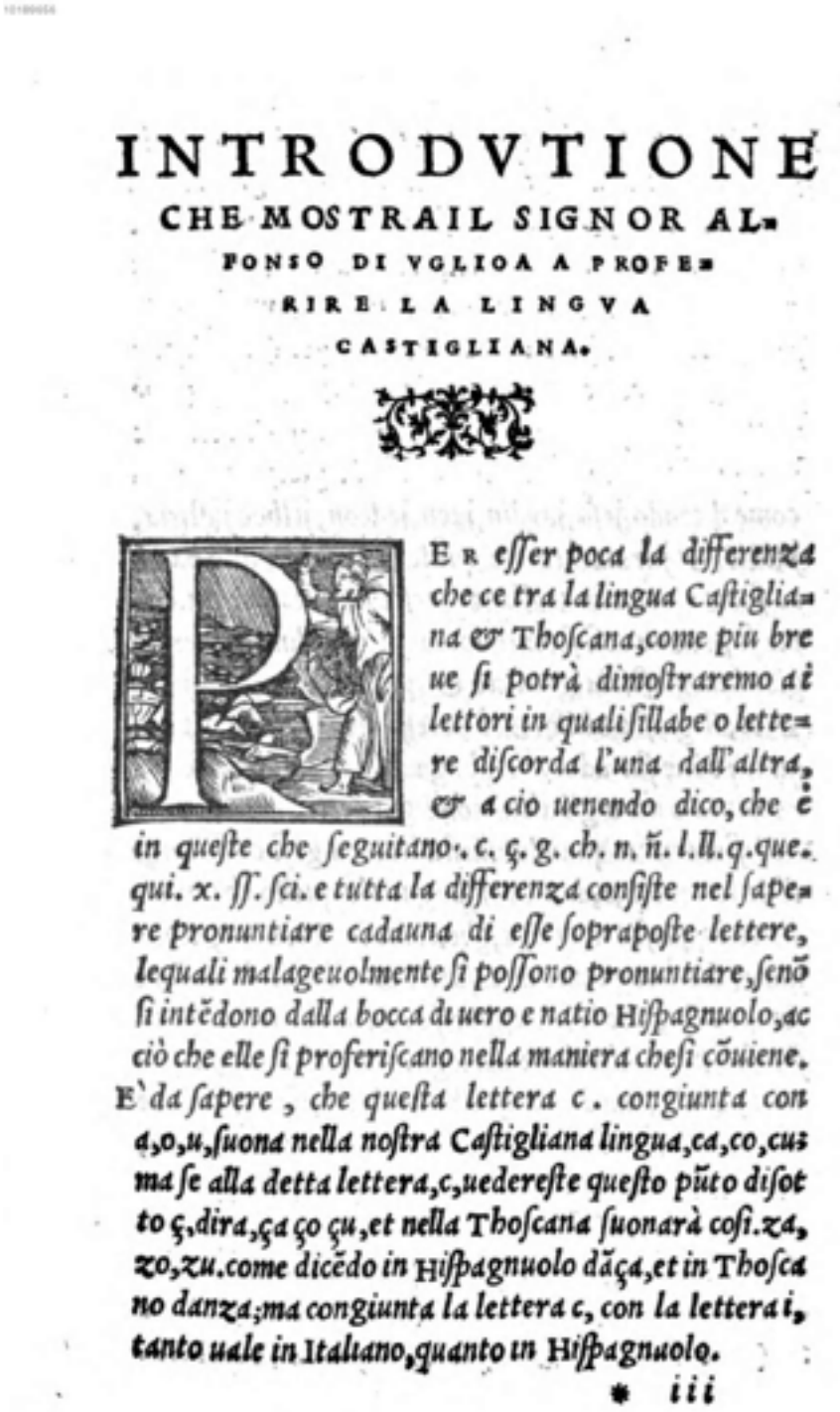
Sem. Aqui estoy señor curando d'estos cauallos.

Cal . Pues como sales de la sala ?

Sem. Abatiose el gerifalte y uinele a endereçar enel alcandera ?

Cal. Assi los diablos te ganen , assi por infortunio arrebatado perezcas , o perpetuo intolerable tormento consigas , el qual en grado incomparablemente la penosa y desastrada muerte que espero

Fig. 8. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrariii, 1556), sig. U3r [BSL 1129371 P.o.hisp. 196 k]



INTRODVTIONE
CHE MOSTRA IL SIGNOR AL-
FONSO DI VGLIOA A PROFE-
RIRE LA LINGVA
CASTIGLIANA.

PER esſer poca la differenza che ce tra la lingua Caſtiglia-na & Thoſcana, come piu bre ue ſi potrà dimoſtraremo à lettori in quali ſillabe o lette-re diſcorda l'una dall'altra, & a cio uenendo dico, che è in queſte che ſeguitano. c. ç. g. ch. n. ñ. l. ll. q. que. qui. x. ſſ. ſci. e tutta la differenza conſiſte nel ſape-re pronuntiare cadauna di eſſe ſoprapoſte lettere, lequali malageuolmente ſi poſſono pronuntiare, ſenõ ſi intẽdono dalla bocca di uero e natio Hiſpagnuolo, ac ciò che elle ſi proferiſcano nella maniera cheſi cõuiene.

E' da ſapere, che queſta lettera c. congiunta con a, o, u, ſuona nella noſtra Caſtigliana lingua, ca, co, cu: ma ſe alla detta lettera, c, uedereſte queſto pũto diſot to ç, dira, ça ço çu, et nella Thoſcana ſuonarà coſi. za, zo, zu. come dicẽdo in Hiſpagnuolo dãça, et in Thoſca no danza; ma congiunta la lettera c, con la lettera i, tanto uale in Italiano, quanto in Hiſpagnuolo.

* iii

Fig. 9. *Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea* ([Venice]: Pietro Nicolini Da Sabio, 1535), Title page [BSL 1096115 Res/P.o.hisp. 1022 d]

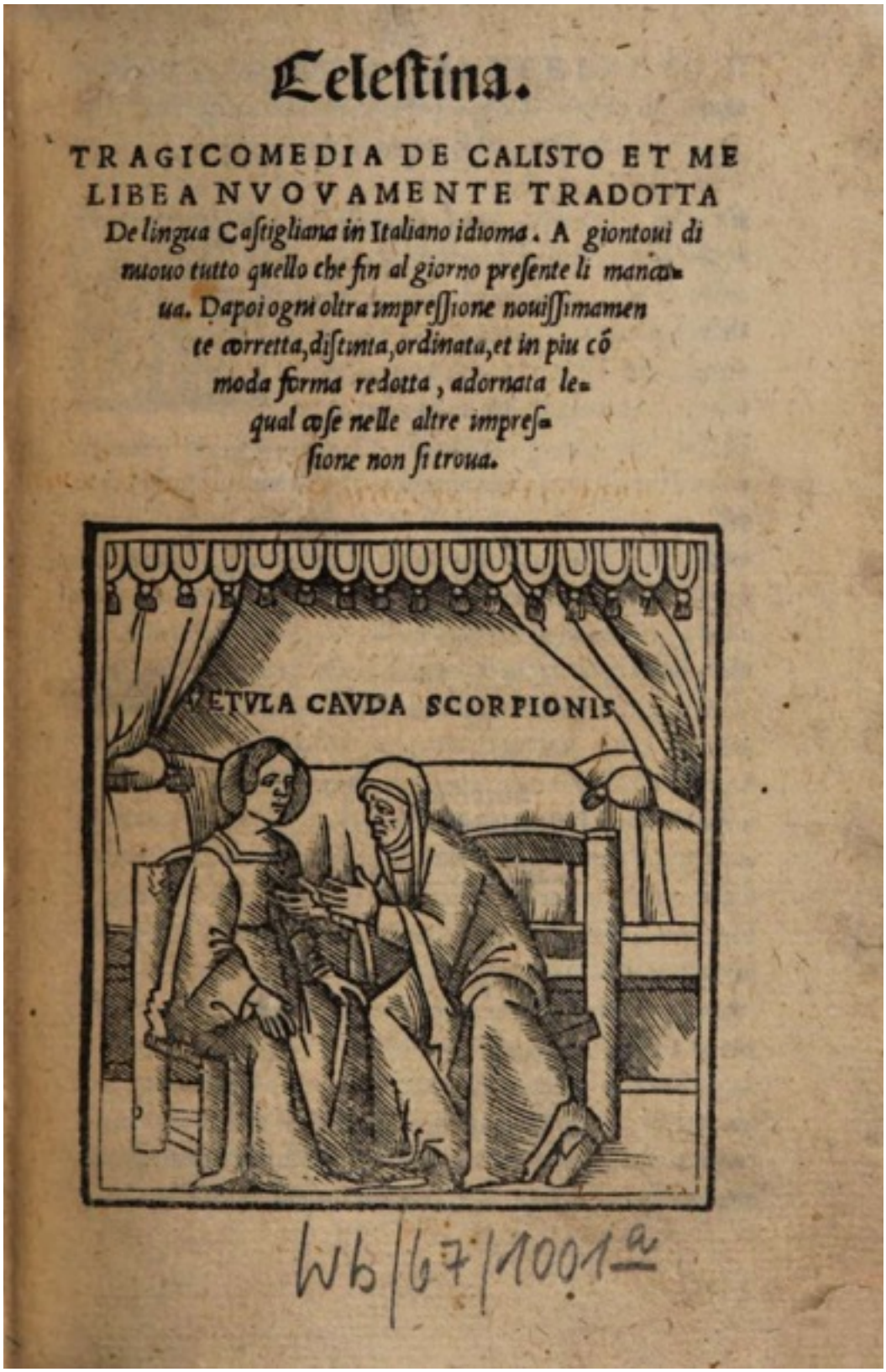


Fig. 10. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Toledo: Juan de Ayala, 1538), Title page [BNE R/4423]

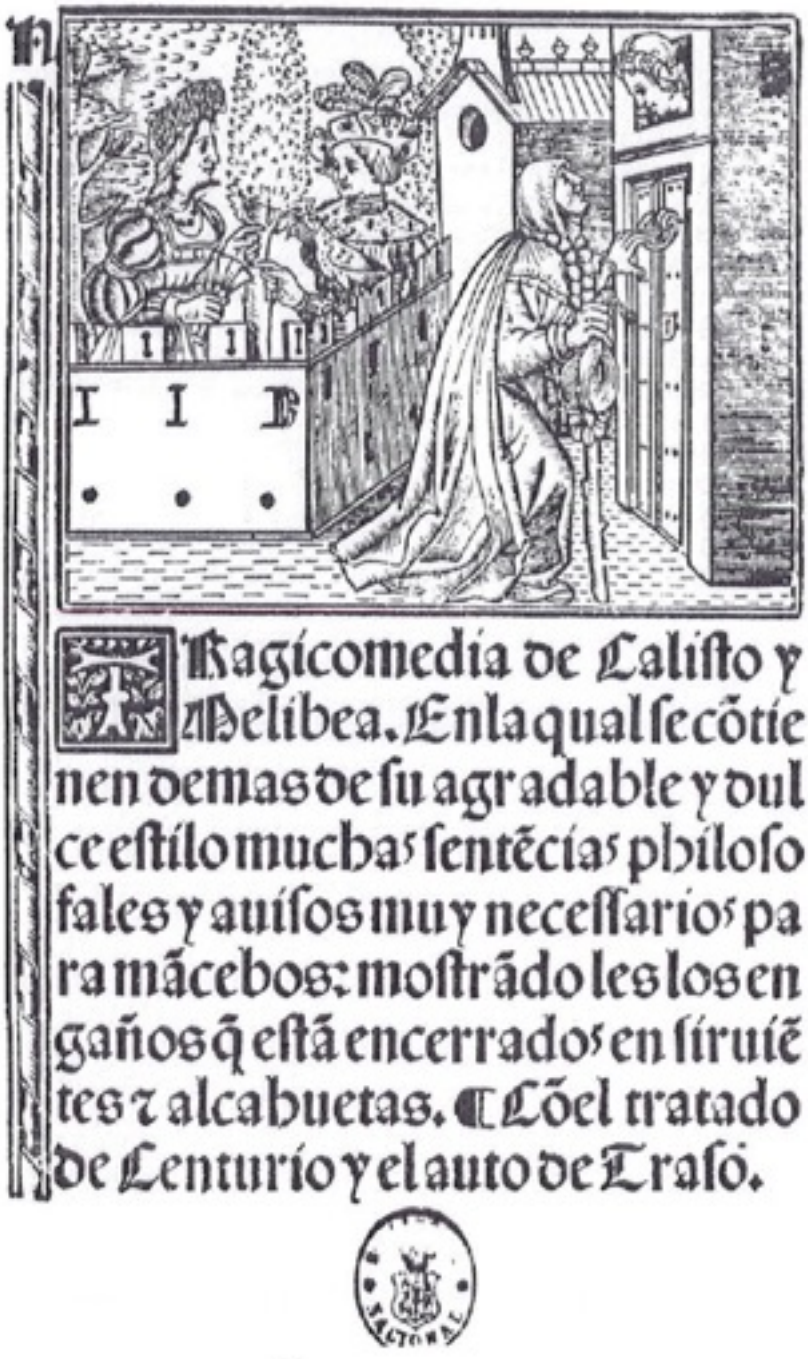


Fig. 11. *Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea* (Zaragoza: Jorge Coci, 1545), Title page [BNE R/39668]

Tragicomedia

de Calisto y Melibea. En la qual se cõtienẽ (de mas de su agradable y dulce estilo) muchas sentẽcias philosophales: y auisos muy necessarios para mancebos: mostrando les los engaños que estan encerrados en sirvientes y alcahuetas. Agora de nueuo corregida y emẽdada. Impressa en çaragoça: en la officina de George Coci. Año de, M.D.XLV.

Appendix 2.

List of XVIc Editions to 1599

Fernando de Rojas

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea

Tragicomedia de Calisto y melibea […] y nuevament añadido el tractado de Centurio (Salamanca: [Juan de Porras], 1502)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y melibea […] y nuevament añadido el tractado de Centurio (Toledo: [Pedro Hagenbach], 1502)

Siguese la Comedia o Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, compuesta en reprehension de los locos enamorados que vencidos en su desordenado apetito a sus amigas llaman y dizen ser su dios. Assi mismo hecho en aviso de los engaños de las alcahuetas y malos lisonjeros sirvientes (Zaragoza: Jorge Coci, 1507)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Jacob Cromberger, 1502 [=1510])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Jacob Cromberger, 1502 [=1511])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea nueuamete reuista y emendada co addision de los argumetos de cada vn auto en principio (Valencia: Juan Joffre, 1514)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Jacob Cromberger, [1513-1515])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y melibea (Valencia: Joan Joffre, 1518)

Libro de Calixto y Melibea y de la puta vieja Celestina (Seville: Jacob Cromberger, 1502 [=1518-1520])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Venice: Juan Batista Pedrezano, 1521)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Sevilla [=Venice: Juan Batista Pedrezano], 1523)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Toledo: Ramón Petras, 1502 [=1524])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Jacob Cromberger & Juan Cromberger, 1525)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Barcelona: Carles Amorós, 1525)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] y nuevamente añadido el tratado de Centurio y el auto de Trasso & sus compañeros. Nuevamente hystoriado (Toledo: Ramón Petras, 1526)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Con el Tratado de Centurion [sic], con diligencia corregido y emendado (Seville: Jacob & Juan Cromberger, 1528)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y melibea (Valencia: Juan Vinao, 1529)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea. Con el Tratado de Centurio y el auto de Traso (Medina del Campo: [Pierre Tovans, 1530-1537])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Barcelona: 1531; reprint of 1525)

Tragicomedia d[e] Calisto y Melibea (Burgos: Juan de Junta, 1531)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Barcelona: Carles Amorós, 1531)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] y nuevamente añadido el tratado de Centurio [Introducion que muestra el Delicado a pronunciar la lengua espanola] (Venice: Stefano Nicolini Da Sabio, 1534)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Barcelona: 1535; reprint of 1525)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Sevilla: Dominico de Robertis, 1536)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Medina del Campo: N.pub., 1536)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Burgos: Juan de Junta, 1536)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] *Con el tratado de Centurio y el auto de Traso* (Toledo: Juan de Ayala, 1538)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] y nuevamente añadido el tratado de Centurio (Antwerp: Guillome Montano, 1539)

Tragicomedia d[e] Calisto y Melibea (Salamanca: Juan de Junta, 1543)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, [1544])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y melibea (Zaragoza: Diego Hernández, 1545)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Zaragoza: Jorge Coci, 1545)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1545)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, [1547])

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Jacob Cromberger, 1550)

Calisto y Melibea. Tragicomedia (Salamanca: N.pub., 1552)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] con summa diligentia corrigida por el. s. Alonso de Ulloa; e impressa en guisa hasta aqui nunca vista. E nuevamente annadio el tractado de Centurio, Con vna exposition de mvchos vocablos Castellanos en lengua Ytaliana (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrariii, 1553)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Zaragoza: Agustín Millán, 1555)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Ha se la añadido nuevamente una Gramatica, y un Vocabulario en Hespañol, y en Italiano, para mas introduction de los que studian la lengua Castellana. Nuevamente corregida por el S. Alonso de Vlloa (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrariii, 1556; reprint of 1553)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Estella: Adrián de Amberes, 1557)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Salamanca: Heirs of Juan de Junta, 1558)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1558)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Estella: Adrián de Amberes, 1560)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora de nueuo corregida y emendada con licencia de los señores del consejo de sus Magestad Impressa (Valladolid: Francisco Fernández de Cordova, 1561)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nuevamente corregida, vista y examinada y con licencia impressa (Barcelona: Claudi Bornat, 1561)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Seville: Sebastián Trujillo, 1562)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea. […] Agora de nueuo corregida y emendada y con licencia impressa (Alcalá: Francisco de Cormellas y Pedro de Robles, 1563)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Philippo Nucio, 1563)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Philippo Nucio, 1568)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea, compuesta por el bachiller F. de R. En la qual se contienen demas de su agradable y dulce estilo […] Agora nuevamente corregida, vista y examinada: y con licencia impressa (Seville: Alonso de la Barrera, 1569)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Alcalá: Juan de Villanueva, 1569)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora de nuevo en esta vltima impression corregida, y emendada (Salamanca: Mathias Màres, 1569)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Madrid: Pierres Cosín, 1569)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Salamanca: Mathias Gast, 1570)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora de nueuo en esta vltima Impression corregida y emendada (Toledo: Francisco de Gúzman, 1573)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Valencia: Joan Navarro, 1575)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Alcalá: Juan de Lequerica, 1575)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Salamanca: Alvaro Ursino de Portinarijs, 1575)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Seville: Alonso Picardo, 1575)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Salamanca: Pedro Lasso, 1577)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Medina del Campo: Francisco del Canto, 1582)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] agora nueuamente corregida y emendada y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Seville: Alonso de la Barrera, 1582)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Barcelona: Hubert Gotart, 1585)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: N.pub., 1585)

Tragicomedia. De Calisto y Melibea (Alcalá: Juan Gracián, 1586)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Salamanca: Juan and Andrés Renaut, 1590)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Alcalá: Hernán Ramírez, 1591)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Antwerp: Officina Plantiniana, 1591)

La Celestina. Trajicomedia de Calisto y Melibea (Alcalá: Hernán Ramírez, 1594)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nueuamente corregida y emendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Tarragona: Felipe Roberto, 1595)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea ([Antwerp]: Officina Plantiniana, 1595)

Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea […] Agora nuevamente corregida y enmendada de muchos errors que antes tenia (Seville: Fernando de Lara, 1596)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto y Melibea ([Leiden]: Officina Plantiniana, 1599)

Tragicomedia di Calisto e Melibea, trans. Alfonso de Ordóñez

Tragicomedio di Calisto e Melibea novamente traducta de spagnolo in italiano idioma (Rome: Eucarias Silber, 1506)

Tragicocomedia di Calisto e Melibea de lingua hispana in idioma italico traducta e novamente revista e correcta e a più lucida venustate reducta per Hieronymo Claricio immolese (Milan: Zanotto da Castione, 1514)

Tragico comedia di Calisto e Melibea de lingua hispana in idioma italico traducta da Alphonso Hordognez, et nuovamente revista e correcta per Vincentio Minutiano, con quanta magiore diligentia, se la metterai a paragone con laltre editione senza dubio elconoscerai (Milan: Nicolai de Gorgonzola, 1515)

Tragicocomedia di Calisto e Melibea novamente traducta de spagnolo in italiano idioma (Venice: [P. Pincius], 1515)

Tragicocomedia di Calisto: e Melibea de lingua hispana in idioma italico traducta & novamente revista: e correcta per Hieronymo Claricio Immolese (Milan: Giovanni Angelo Scinzenzeler, 1519)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea novamente tradocta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma Aggiontovi di novo tutto quello che fin al giorno presente li manchaua. Da poi ogni altra impressione novissimamente correcta: distincta ordenada: &in piu comoda forma reducta: adornada etiam de molte bellissime figure (Venice: Cesare Arrivabene, 1519)

Celestina tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea novamente tradocta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma. Aggiontovi di novo tutto quello che fin al giorno presente li manchaua. Dapoi ogni altra impressione novissimamente correcta, distincta ordenada, & in piu commoda forma reducta, adornada (Venice: Gregorio de Gregorii, 1525)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea novamente tradotta de lingua Castigliana in Italiano idioma. Aggiontovi di nuovo tutto quello che fin al giorno presente li manchava. Dapoi ogni altra impressione novissimamente corretta (Venice: Francesco Caron, 1525)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea novamente tradocta de lingua castigliana in Italiano idioma (por Alfonso Ordoñez). Aggiontoni di nouo tutto quello che fin al giorno presente li manchaua (Venice: Caron/Gregorio de Gregorii, 1525)

Celestina. Tragicommedia de Calisto et Melibea nuovamente tradotta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma ([Venice]: Marchio Sessa, 1531)

Celestina tragicomedia di Calisto et Melibea, tradotta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma. Nuovamente ampliata et corretta (Venice: Francesco di Alessandro Bendoni and Mapheo Pasini, 1531)

Celestina (Venice: Juan Batista Pedrezano, 1531)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea nuovamente tradotta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma. A giontovi di nuovo tutto quello che fin al giorno presente li mancava. Dapoi ogni oltra impressione novissimamente corretta, distinta, ordinata, et in più comoda forma redotta, adornatalequal cose nelle altre impressione non si trova ([Venice]: Pietro Nicolini Da Sabio, 1535)

Celestina. Tragicomedia de Calisto et Melibea nuovamente tradotta de lingua castigliana in italiano idioma. Dapoi ogni altra impressione nuovissimamente corretta, distinta, ordinata, et in più commoda forma ridotta. Adornata di tutte le sue figure aogni atto corrispondenti lequal cose nelle altre impressione non si trovava ([Venice]: Pietro Nicolini Da Sabio, 1541)

Celestina. Tragicocomedia di Calisto e Melibea nuovamente tradotta de spagnolo in italiano idioma (Venice: Bernardino de Bendoni, 1543)

Fernán Pérez de Oliva

Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre

Diálogo de la dignidad del hombre y por el contrario de sus trabajos y miserias, in *Obras que Francisco Cervantes de Salazar ha hecho, glosado y traducido* (Alcalá de Henares: Juan de Brocar, 1546)

Las obras del Maestro Fernán Pérez de Oliva, natural de Córdoba (Cordoba: Gabriel Ramos Bejerano, 1586)

***Dialogo della dignità del'uomo*, trans. Alfonso de Ulloa**

Dialogo della degnità dell'uomo, nel quale si ragiona delle grandezze e maraviglie che nell' huomo sono, e per il contrario delle sue miserie e travagli (Venice: Niccolò Bevilacqua,1563)

Dialogo della degnità dell'uomo, nel quale si ragiona delle grandezze e maraviglie che nell' huomo sono, e per il contrario delle sue miserie e travagli... in questa seconda impressione corretto ... & aggiunta la seconda parte (Venice: Francesco Rampazetto, 1564)

Baldassare Castiglione

Il Cortegiano

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Filippo I Giunta, 1528)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio & Andrea I Torresano, 1528)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione [Toscolano: Alessandro Paganini, after 1528]

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Filippo I Giunta, 1529)

Il libro del cortegiano (Florence: Filippo I Giunta, 1529)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Parma: Antonio Viotti, 1530)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Filippo I Giunta, 1531)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Benedetto Giunta, 1531)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Parma: Antonio Viotti, 1532)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio & Andrea I Torresano, 1533)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Benedetto Giunta, 1537)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Venice: Vittore Ravani, 1538)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Venice: Giovanni Padovano, 1538)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione ([Venice]: Curzio Troiano Navò, 1538)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Venice: Luigi Torti, 1539)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione, nuovamente stampato, et con somma diligenza revisto (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio, 1541)

Il cortegiano del conte Baltassar Castiglione. Nuovamente stampato, et con somma diligentia revisto, con la sua tavola di nuovo aggionta (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrariii, 1541)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione, nuovamente stampato, et con somma diligenza revisto (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio, 1541)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldasar Castiglione (Venice: Luigi Torti, 1544)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baltassar Castiglione, nuovamente stampato, e con somma diligentia revisto, con la sua tavola di nuovo aggionta (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1544)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio, 1545)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente stampato, et con somma diligentia revisto con la sua tavola di nuovo aggiunta (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1546)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione. Di nuovo rincontrato con l'originale scritto di mano de l'auttore: con la tavola di tutte le cose degne di notitia: et di piu, con una brieue raccolta de le conditioni, che si ricercano a perfetto cortegiano, et a donna di palazzo (Venice: Aldo I Manuzio, 1547)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1549)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Novamente stampato et con somma diligentia revisto, con la sua tavola di nuovo aggiunta (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1551)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: Domenico Giglio, 1552)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Novamente stampato, et revisto (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1552)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente con somma diligenza corretto, & revisto per il Dolce secondo l'essemplare del proprio autore (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1552)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldesar Castiglione (Florence: Bernardo I Giunta, 1554)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente con diligenza revisto per m. Lodovico Dolce, secondo l'esemplare del proprio auttore, e nel margine apostillato, con la tavola (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1556)

Il libro del cortegiano. Nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Girolamo Scoto, 1556)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: Bernardino Fasani, 1559)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1559)

Il libro del cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1560)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente con diligentia revisto e corretto, secondo l'esemplare del proprio autore (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1562)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1562)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1563)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1563)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1563)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente con diligenza revisto per m. Lodovico Dolce, secondo l'esemplare del proprio autore. Con l'aggiunta de gli argomenti per ciascun libro, e nel margine apostillato, et con la tavola delle cose notabili (Venice: Gabriele Giolito De Ferrarii, 1564)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldassar Castiglione, nuovamente con diligenza revisto per m. Lodovico Dolce, secondo l'esemplare del proprio autore. Con l'aggiunta degli argomenti per ciascun libro, e nel margine apostillato, & con la tavola delle cose notabili.(Venice: Girolamo Cavalcalupo, 1565)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1568)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione (Venice: per Comin da Trino, 1573)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione. Nuovamente con diligenza revisto per Lodovico Dolce (Venice: Domenico Farri, 1574)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldassarre Castiglione. Riveduto, et corretto da Antonio Ciccarelli (Venice: Bernardo Basa, 1584)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldessar Castiglione nuovamente stampato, et con somma diligentia riveduto. Con la sua tavola di nuovo aggiunt... (Venice: Domenico Giglio, 1587)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldassarre Castiglione. Riveduto & corretto da Antonio Ciccarelli da Fuligni, dottore in theologia (Venice: la Minimam Societatem, 1593)

Il cortegiano del conte Baldassarre Castiglione. Riveduto, & corretto da Antonio Ciccarelli (Venice: Paolo Ugolino, 1599)

***El Cortesano*, trans. Juan Boscán**

Los quatro libros, del cortesano compuestos en italiano por el conde Balthasar castellon, y agora nueuamente traduzidos en lengua castellana por Boscan (Barcelona: Pedro Monpezat, 1534)

Los quatro libros del cortesano Copuestos en ytaliano por el conde Baltasar Castellon agora nueuamente traduzidos en lengua Castellana por Boscan (Toledo: N.pub, 1539)

Libro llamado el cortesano (Salamanca: Pierre Tovans, 1540)

Libro llamado el cortesano ([Sevilla: Jacob Cromberger], 1542)

Libro llamado el cortesano (Toledo: N.pub., 1542)

Libro llamado el Cortesano traduzido agora nueuamente en nuestro vulgar castellano por Boscan (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1544)

Libro llamado el cortesano [Sevilla: Jacob Cromberger, 1548]

Libro llamado el cortesano ([Sevilla: Jacob Cromberger], 1549)

Libros llamado el Cortesano traducido en nuestro vulgar castellano por Boscán (Zaragoza: Miguel de Zapila, 1554)

Libro llamado el cortesano (Toledo: N.pub., 1559)

El Cortesano traduzido por Boscan en nuestro vulgar castellano nueuamente agora corregido (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1561)

El Cortesano [del Conde Baltasar castellon]; traduzido de italiano en nuestro vulgar castellono [sic] por Boscan (Valladolid: Francisco Fernánadez de Cordoba, 1569)

El cortesano traduzido por Boscan en nuestro vulgar castellano nueuamente agora corregido (Antwerp: Philippo Nucio, 1574)

El cortesano (Zaragoza: N.pub., 1580)

El Cortesano [de Baltasar Castellon]; traduzido de italiano en nuestro vulgar Castellano, por Boscan (Salamanca: Pedro Lasso, 1581)

Pietro Aretino

La vita delle puttane

Opera nova del divo e unico signor Pietro Aretino, la qual scuopre le astuzie, scelerità, frode tradimenti, assassinamenti, inganni, truffarie, strigarie, calcagnarie, robarie e le gran finzion, e dolce paroline ch'usano le cortigiane o voi dir tapune per ingannar li semplici gioveni, per la qual causa i poverelli per ciò restano appesi come uccelli al vischio, e al

fin con vituperio e disonor posti al basso con la borsa leggera. E chi questa opra leggerà gli serà uno especchio da potersi schiffar dalle lor ingannatrice mani (Naples: N.pub., 1534)

Opera nova del divo e unico signor Pietro Aretino, la qual scuopre le astuzie, scelerità, frode tradimenti, assassinamenti, inganni, truffarie, strigarie, calcagnarie, robarie, mangiarie, crudeltadi, menzogne o voi bugie, e le gran finzion, e dolce paroline che usano le cortiggiane o voi dir tapune per inganare li semplici gioveni, per la qual causa li poverelli per ciò restano appesi come uccelli al vischio, e al fin con vituperio e disonore posti al basso con la borsa leggera. E chi questa opra leggeranno gli serà uno espechio da potersi schiffare de le loro ingannatrice mani e diabolici costumi (Venice: N.pub., 1535)

Opera nova del divo e unico signor Pietro Aretino, la qual scopre le astuzie, scelerità, frode tradimenti, assassinamenti, inganni, truffarie, strigarie, calcagnarie, robarie, mangiarie, crudeltà, menzogne, e le gran finzion, e dolce paroline che usano le cortiggiane o vol dir tapune per ingannar li semplici gioveni, per la qual causa i poverelli per ciò restano appesi come uccelli al vischio, e al fin con vituperio e disonor posti al basso con la borsa leggera. E chi questa opra leggeranno gli serà uno espechio da potersi schiffare de le lor ingannatrice mani (Naples: N.pub., 1535)

Opera noua del diuo et unico signor Pietro Aretino, la qual sucopre le astutie, scelerità, frode, tradimenti, […] che usano le cortigiane (Naples: N.pub., 1547)

Dialogo del divino Pietro Aretino, che scopre le falsità, rubarie, tradimenti, & fatuchiarie ch'usano le corteggiane, per ingannare li simplici uomini, che de loro s'inamorono. Intitulata la Nanna & Antonia (Np.: N.pub., N.y.)

Dialogo del divino Pietro Aretino, che scopre le falsità, rubarie, tradimenti e fatuchiarie ch'usanole corteggiane, per ingannare li semplici uomini, che de loro s'innamorano. Intitolata la Nanna e Antonia (Paris: N.pub, N.y)

***Coloquio de las damas*, trans. Fernán Xuárez**

Coloquio del phamoso e gran demostrador de vicios e virtudes Pedro Aretino en el qual se descrubren las falsedades, tratos, engaños e hechiserías de que usan las mugeres enamoradas para engañar a los sinples y a los muy avisados honbres que dellas se enamoran. Agora nuevamente tradusido de lengua Toscana en castellano por el Beneficiado Fernan Xuares vesino natural de Seuilla (Seville: Juan de León, 1547)

Coloquio de las Damas, agora nueamente corregido y emendado (Seville: Dominico de Robertis, 1548)

Colloquio de las Damas, Aora nueuamente impresso y corregido (Zaragoza: Diego Hernández, 1548)

Coloquio de las damas. Nuevamente impresso (Medina del Campo: Pedro de Castro, 1549)

Bibliography

List of Abbreviations

BNE	*Biblioteca Nacional de España*
BSL	*Bavarian State Library*
CORDE	*Corpus Diacrónico del Español*
DRAE	*Diccionario de la Lengua Espanola*
IEP	*Internet Encylopedia of Philosophy*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary Online*

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